

786 TANK BN

THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION

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THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION



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Dedication

This picture history of the 786th Tank Battalion is thoughtfully dedicated to the memory of our comrades who died in combat in the European Theatre of Operations March 1, 1945 — May 7, 1945.

KILLED IN ACTION

1st LT. HOWARD T. SHEELY

"D" Company

S. SGT. PAUL L. RADER

"A" Company

SGT. IRWIN BUHLER

"A" Company

SGT. JOSEPH E. SAHM

"B" Company

TEC. 4 EARL E. HERRING

"B" Company

TEC. 4 ARTHUR T. FRAZIER

"D" Company

CPL. LESLIE SPRINGSTON

HQ Company

CPL. HARRY I. NUGEN

"B" Company

TEC. 5 ARTHUR C. SMITH

"D" Company

PFC. ALONEY LAWRENCE

"D" Company

PFC. GEORGE M. CAGLE

"D" Company

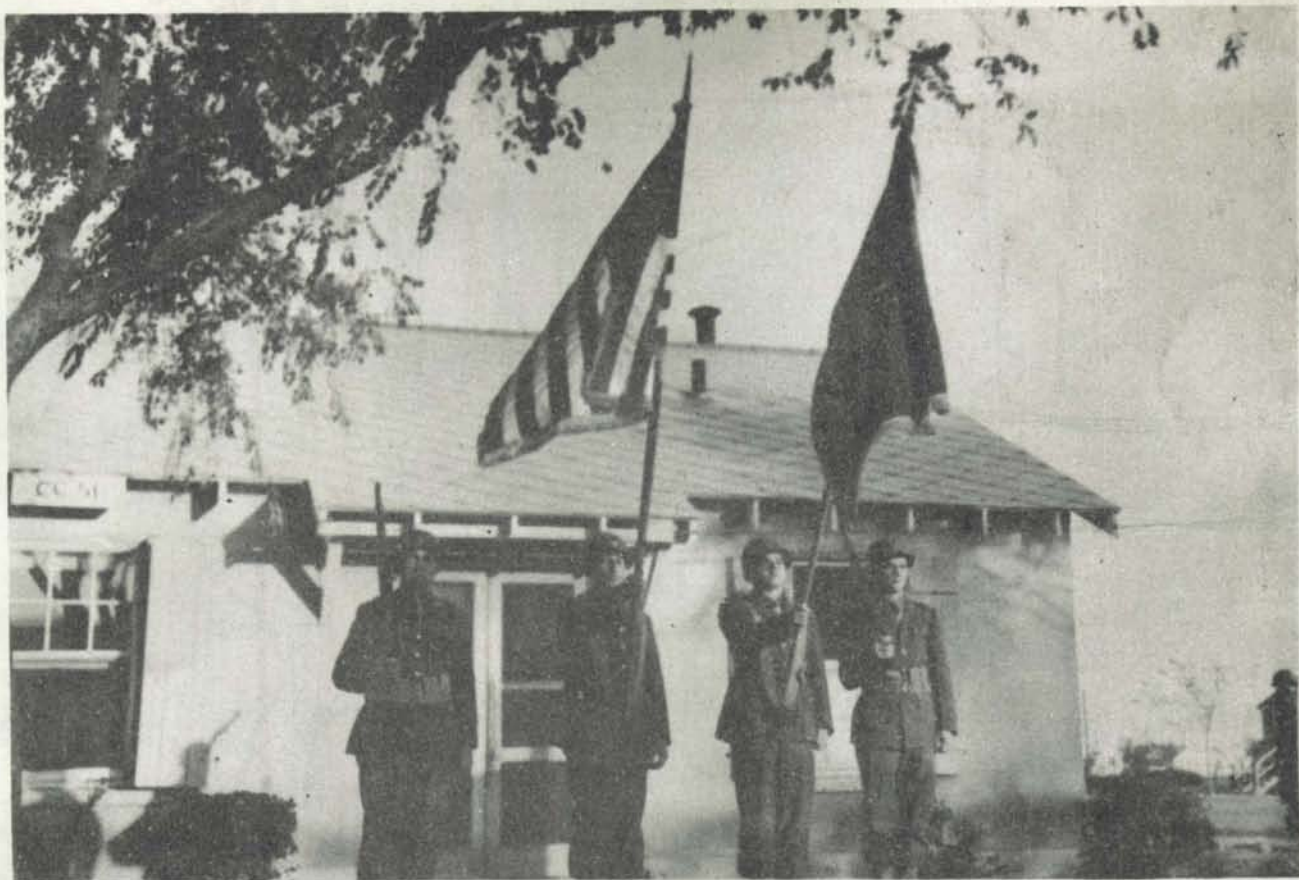
PFC. AURELIO G. CHAPPA

"D" Company

PFC. EVERETTE L. CAVENDER

"C" Company

N.A.



Battalion History

In 1943, the Table of Organization for armored divisions was streamlined and as a result the 786th Tank Battalion was formed from the 14th Armored Division on September 20, 1943. Although it was made up of men from all types of units, the outfit was sufficiently well trained by November 8th to pass the Individual Training Program or ITP tests. After a few weeks of forced training, "B" Company struggled through rain and storm to pass the Physical Training test on December 6th with a score of 83.47.

As soon as the tanks were in shape to roll, the unit began platoon and company problems. The peak was reached when the battalion made the famous attack of the Fortified Area, December 16th on one of the coldest days in the history of Arkansas. While we were taking the Platoon Combat Firing tests, the late Lt. Gen. Leslie J. McNair, Commanding General of Army Ground Forces, arrived at Camp Chaffee. He inspected parts of the battalion and was very well pleased with the way the unit was shaping up.

The 786th was picked to carry out the Army Ground Forces test of the gyro stabilizer to determine whether it would be worthwhile to continue to fit tanks with the gyro. The outfit spent two weeks in the field dry running and firing from March 6-18, 1944. As a result the gyro stayed and became quite useful to us during the course of our fight through Germany.

Three weeks were to have been spent on the test but an order came through for the battalion to move to Ft. Sill so the third week was spent in loading and crating and getting everything ready for the move. A wheel vehicle column left first to arrange for the arrival of the main body. The main body boarded the train and left Camp Chaffee with bands playing and lovely women waving their farewell. Rumors ran to a new high as to our ultimate duties at the new post. The rarest had it from a high official that the unit would merely stop at Ft. Sill to pick up ammunition and then continue on to the Pacific. The train arrived on the morning of March 30th and we were met by a band from

the Field Artillery School and Service Company trucks, thank the Lord!

The mission of the battalion was explained in a few words, we were to be "school troops". We learned how to fire indirectly and were presently firing problems for the school the same as regular artillery units would. Their knowledge of tanks was quite limited since they expected the same speed from us as they would get from an artillery unit. That much speed wasn't possible and, consequently, battalion headquarters received numerous "gig sheets" from higher headquarters.

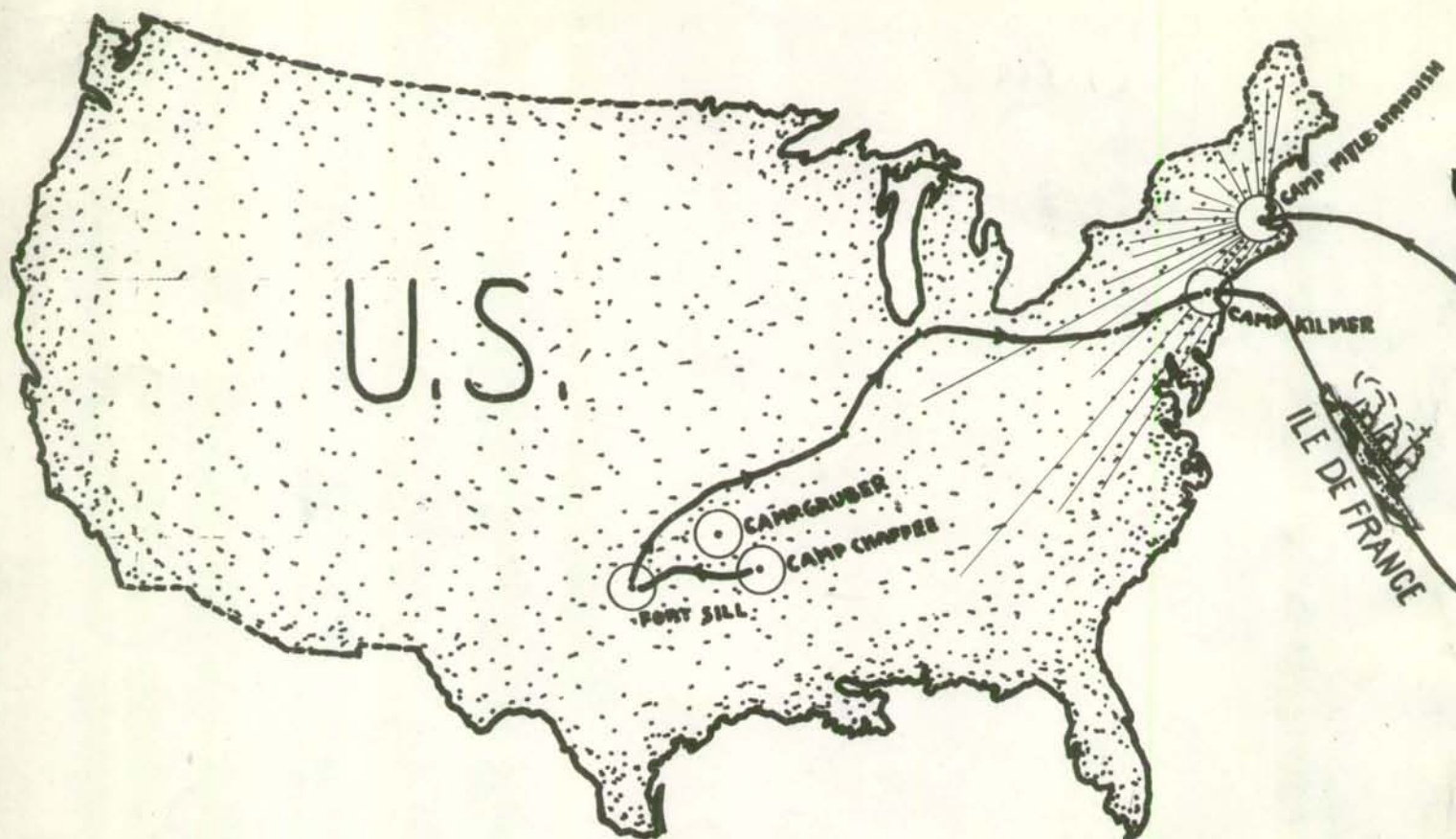
About the 1st of September the battalion was notified that there would be another AGF Physical Training Test and the next two weeks were spent in preparation for it. "C" Company was picked to uphold the battalion's record and came through with same score as "B" Company's previous mark, 83.4%.

On September 20th, Activation Day was celebrated with field events and a baseball game in the afternoon. Major General Ward, Commandant of the Field Artillery School, presented the awards to all winners. Lt. John "Toothless" Shevlin was the very excellent master of ceremonies.

During October word was received that our presence was desired overseas in order to crush the Germans into submission. Inspection after inspection was pulled to get our clothes and individual equipment into tip-top condition. Finally entraining day came and on November 19 two trains, under Captain Waldron and Captain Jendro, rolled out of Fort Sill leaving the Artillery School far behind. After arriving at Camp Kilmer, everything went into high gear and everyone was tearing madly around for this and that, physicals, lectures, etc., far into the night.

We were released from restriction so everyone went to New York City for one last fling before sailing. Some are still wondering how they got back to Kilmer.

On the morning of November 28 we took the train to the port; boarded a ferry there and sailed up New York Harbor to



the pier where the Ile de France lay. The Queen Mary was at the same pier and we had hopes that we were scheduled to ride her over but, after struggling up two flights of stairs to the passenger floor, we found that the Ile de France was our ship. Thank God for the Red Cross. That was on every man's lips as we got to the gang plank. There was a short delay before loading and the Red Cross girls came forth with plenty of coffee, donuts, and chocolate bars; it was a life saver. The loading began shortly thereafter and soon we were all on board and stowed away. From then on until the end of the voyage every other message from the speaker system was "4989T report here" and "4989T report there". At about 0500, November 30 the Ile de France left her place in the New York Harbor and moved out to the open sea. The first day will be remembered by one and all as one of the worst as far as the happiness of the stomach was concerned; men and women were sick from one end of the ship to the other. The 786th took the worst beating you will remember since our jobs called for us being up and about from 10 to 18 hours a day. The announcer nearly lost his voice calling for "4989T" and for his efforts there was only a feeble response. The rest of the trip was very quiet and, with the exception of the necessity for so much work, very pleasant.

December 9 found us anchored in the harbor at Greenock, Scotland. The sight was beautiful, one that reminded many of home, with the snow covered hills, the little villages on the water's edge and the cold, crisp air which gave all pangs of homesickness. We debarked via a ferry and after standing in the cold for an hour or so, we boarded a train, the likes of which we had never seen before, for Macclesfield, England. An all night trip brought the unit to its new home for six weeks. There was snow on the ground and mighty rough going with packs and all.

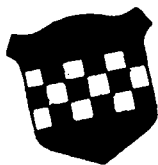
The rest of the six weeks were spent drawing new tanks, peeps, trucks and half-tracks, then cleaning them for future operations. The English people were very cordial and nearly every man in the battalion enjoyed the brief stay with the exception of the weather, of course, which was unpleasant but we all made the best of it. Some went on passes to Manchester, London and various other towns around England. Christmas wasn't quite as gay and bright

as a United States Christmas. The turkey dinner was swell and complete with all the trimmings but presents were conspicuous for their absence.

While in Macclesfield we received our baptism of fire in a very unexpected way. The people there had not been bothered by air raids for over two years so we figured we would be safe enough. Well, one morning about 0520 the sirens began screaming but as Macclesfield was not an important target most everyone went back to sleep. At 0535 something came over, that sounded like a bomber, headed for Liverpool or Manchester — so we thought. Then the motor cut out and shortly after there was a terrific explosion — a V-1. For the next 20 minutes we heard several go over, cut out and explode. The authorities said they were launched from planes over the channel and were aimed at Manchester.

Finally everything was ready and the battalion left England on January 21 for France. The main body went up the Seine River and landed at Rouen while various other parts landed at Le Havre. Our first C. P. in France was in the sleepy little town of Bacqueville but in the meantime the 13th AD landed so we very graciously moved out and let them in. It was a rough night that we made the trip to Totes. "A" Company's quarters had burned the night before while "B" Company's building was on a V-1 bomb site and had been blown apart long before.

We were waiting anxiously for someone to tell us what to do but we weren't idle. Sgt. Gross took off for Soissons with the Service Company ammo section and came back loaded to the gills, 11 tons on each 2½ ton truck. On January 30 the word came to move and the 8th of February found us settled in La Reid, Belgium and attached to General Hodges' First Army. We received our code name of Destruction, thus the name of this book. The company commanders and some of the platoon leaders went up to the front which at that time was along the Roer River to get an idea of what it was all about. More waiting, more equipping, more PX rations, more bitching, etc., but it was fun even if the language was a bit hard to understand. Thanks to the PX officer we even had "cokes" for the first time since leaving the states.




HEADQUARTERS NINETY-NINTH DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
APO 449, US Army

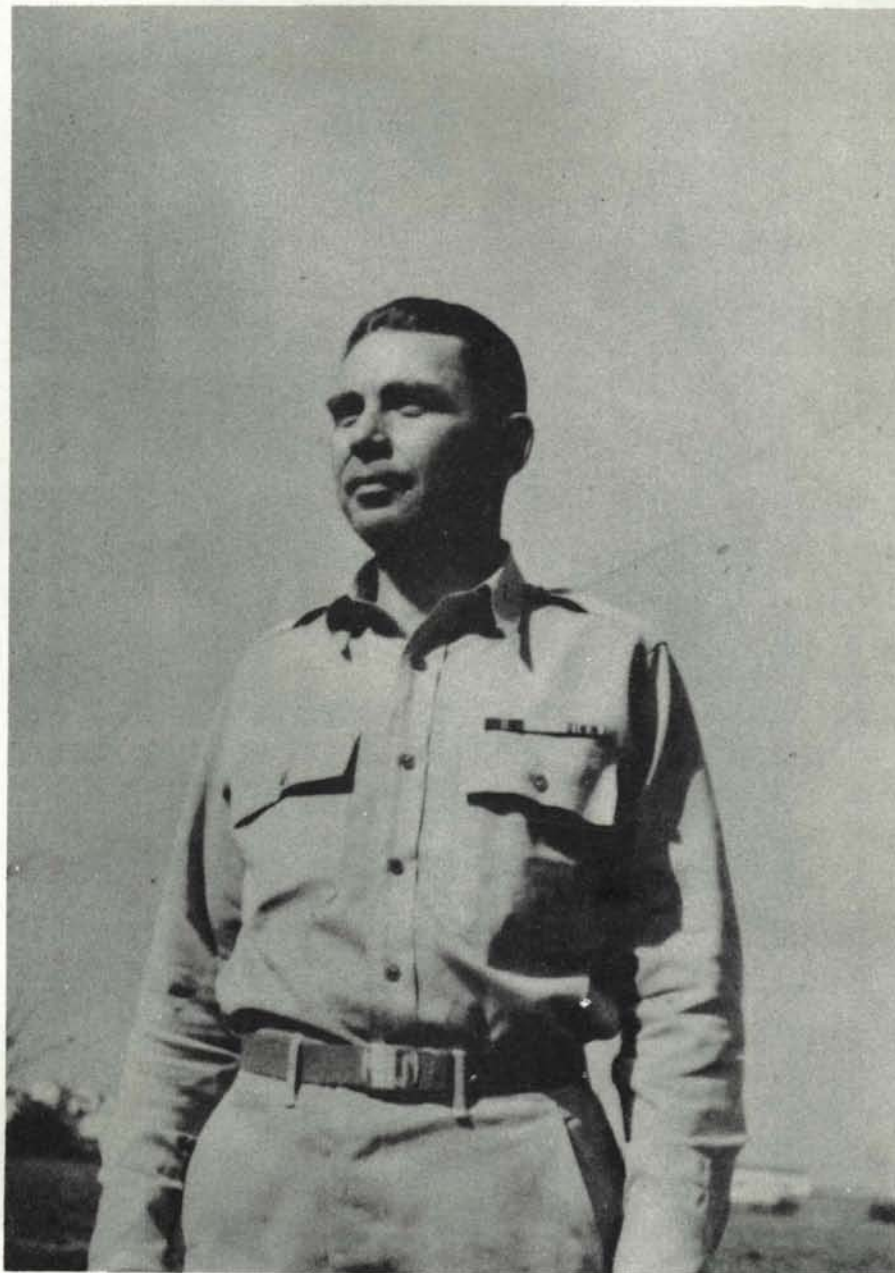
13 June 1945

TO: The Officers and Men of the 786th Tank Battalion.

You joined us for your first combat on our drive to the Rhine River. Your very first action proved to us that you had the will, the courage and the determination to defeat the Germans. In ensuing actions you won your place as a fighting outfit. Your earnest cooperation and fighting spirit gained the unstinted praise of everyone in the 99th Infantry Division and undoubtedly greatly aided the Division in the success it attained.

Your job has been well done. I regret your departure from the Division and wish you continued success in future tasks.


WALTER E. LAUER
Major General - US Army
Commanding



Lt. Col. William E. Skinner
Commanding Officer



Greene Gives Colors To 786th Tank Battalion

In a colorful military ceremony Major General Douglas T. Greene, Commanding General of the 16th Armored Division, presented the newly attached 786th Tank Battalion with its colors on the 25th Tank Battalion Parade Grounds.

The occasion was the "official" welcome for the 786th and its commander, Lt. Col. William E. Skinner, Jr. The battalion is now attached to the 16th Armored Division for training and administration.

Following the presentation of colors, the entire battalion passed in review for General Greene and Colonel Skinner. Headquarters and "D" companies were color companies. The 16th Armored Division band provided the music.

—From Camp Chaffee Armoredier 9 December 1943

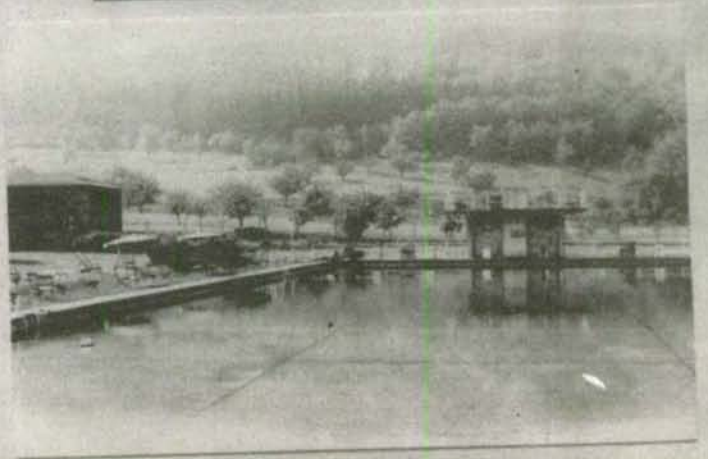
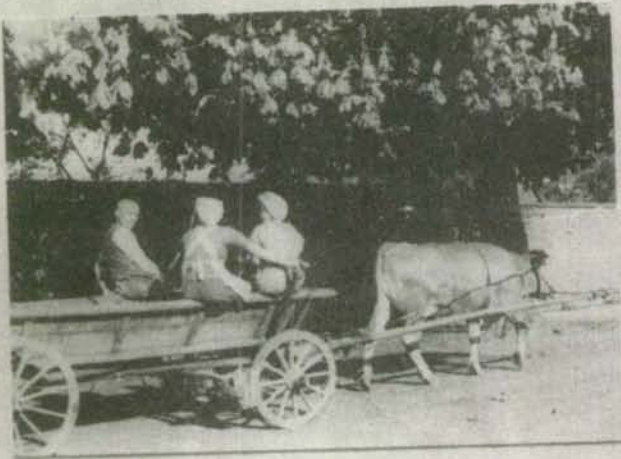


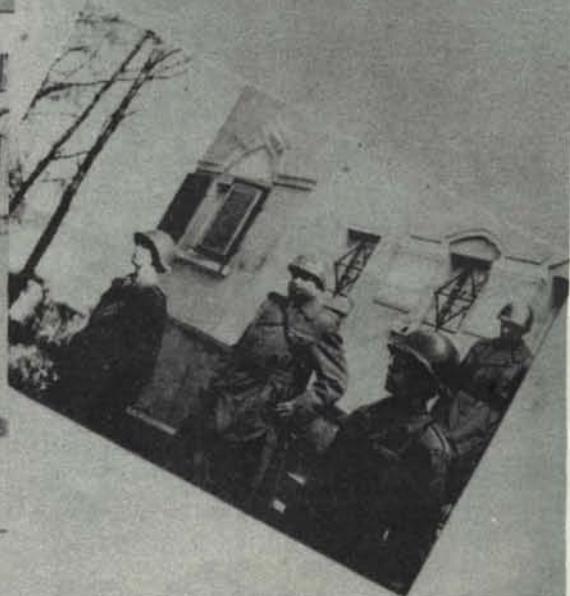
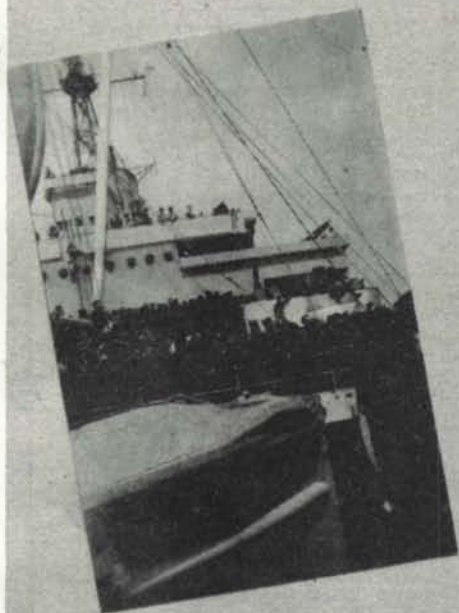
Battalion Staff

Standing, left to right: Captain Nat A. Meriwether, Captain Wayne A. Jendro, 1st. Lt. William L. Magnus, 1st Lt. Sterling R. Martin, 1st Lt. James Hicks, Captain Josiah T. Newcomb, Captain James G. Tynan, Captain Robert K. Ashby.

Sitting left to right: Major Charles F. Ryan, Lt. Col. William E. Skinner, Jr., Major Alvin E Meyer.







Headquarters Company

ASSAULT GUN PLATOON

I brought my accordion with me — why? — I don't know. But it was getting heavy and bulky and many a time I was tempted to let it gently slip from my hand into the Atlantic Ocean. But I kept it and practiced with it so often that even the platoon warned me that they would sabotage the instrument.

While puttering around with it one evening in a French chateau, Tec. 5 Ennis joined in with the company bugle and soon Pfc. Holas joined in with his mouth organ followed by Sergeant Commons with a tonnette. We had to have drums so Pfc. C. Olson rigged up a mess kit, cooking pots, and the gas alarm.

This was the beginning of our platoon orchestra and with the leadership of Sergeant Donofrio, it proved very helpful and a success when we played "Happy Birthday" or held concerts in the squad room near the blazing fire-place every evening. Every man would join in as we sang "The Little Brown Jug" or "Those 88's Are Breaking Up Those Tankers of Mine". And the candle burned late in the evening as we played, square danced and danced the "Hocky-Pocky", an English dance we learned during our pleasant stay in dear old "Mac"—

TANK SECTION

The Tank Section had quite a time for themselves when we left the First Army and went to the Third Army. There were only four of them and they had two tanks. Johnson and Hardin had one; Rogers and Olson had the other. It took Johnson and Hardin about fifteen days to make the trip. When their tank went out, they had a swell time. They stayed with a German family and got along swell.

From what they tell about it, I guess they did about everything. They took a lot of good pictures of themselves with the family. It is doubtful if they cared when they caught up with the company.

It took Rogers and Olson about nine days, but they had quite a time for themselves. They had a bulldozer on their tank and continued the voyage with Abshire and his bulldozer. One place where they stopped to repair their tracks proved to be very interesting what with all the steaks with which they were provided. They lived like kings until their tanks were fixed and continued on with their journey.

MORTAR PLATOON

It is with pride and admiration we mention our team of 24 men. Other platoons sometimes call us the "Stove Pipe Gang" but we feel we are in a class of our own being the only mortar men in the battalion. We admire and respect our good-looking Texas leader, Lt. Westbrook and our flash Staff Sergeant Trachsel from Upper Sandusky, Ohio. In losing Cpl. Springston by a German bomb and at the same time sending Fisher to the hospital, we have received some new replacements but most of us have been together from one to three years.

We still think that the war ended when it did because the Jerries thought Chuck Miller and Mike Gonzales were going to drink all their schnapps and beer. Edwin Stanton and Charles Dudzak, probably the two greatest lovers we have, could do better if they would take Wm. Snodgrass and his liberated accordion along with them. Snod has really learned to make sweet music.

The two Franks of our platoon, Keisch and Landis, were known as the burgermeisters. They both spoke good German and were a lot of help to the battalion. It was supposed to be business when they talked to the girls, but we still wonder.

Four good boys did an extra fine job of driving through France, Belgium and Germany. They were Vidas, Bliven, Budnick and Stagnitta. It was a good feeling on those long blackout drives to have one of these boys at the wheel.

A corporal who is married now but wasn't before he went over, took a Pfc. Smith in to New York with the intention of drinking him under the table. Two other mortar boys helped Smith bring Falconer back to Camp Kilmer.

Two boys who live in Texas were probably the most interested in farming. They would walk for miles through the countryside. They are good swimmers, too. I think Escobar got to where he could swim across the Mainz River faster than Zinn could.

On off duty hours when everyone else was out trying to trade chocolate for beer, wine, etc., you could usually find Peterzynski, Ross and Foley writing to their wives back home. It's hard to tell where Forrest will go when he gets out of the Army. He will have a hard time deciding between Arkansas, England and Germany. He sure was mad when we had to leave Germany.

RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON

Our platoon had the mission of preceding the battalion to Geisenhausen from Landshut. My squad was to move out one half an hour ahead of the battalion putting up road markers. The remainder of the platoon was to follow and locate billets for the

battalion. Keller, Long and myself arrived at Geisenhausen about dark. We searched the town as best as possible under blackout conditions but never found the rest of the platoon. Finally after a few hours search we found the advance guard of the battalion parked outside of town. They had driven thru town and the road was too narrow for them to turn around. Everybody was mad and it had started snowing, soaking and freezing everyone. The rest of the battalion finally showed up and came buzzing right on thru the town and there we were all snarled in a beautiful traffic jam, and no billets as yet. We finally located a small trail leading off the road and sending the tanks over a steep bank into a field we finally got them all turned around. By that time word came that billets had been found and by 0300 we finally got to bed.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

German airplanes, screaming 88's and wonderful stew sure makes a guy wish he were someplace else besides in the army. That's the menu that the so-called "rear echelon" of Hq had to enjoy for three weeks in that picturesque little hot box called Linz.

The S-1 half track, with Farnham as its nurse, Sgts. Royer and Wright, and Cpls. Budnick and Franz as its crew were sent out as a relay station. The remaining commo section stayed at Bn Hq and they were pretty well dug in. That cellar was a veritable fortress and after the first air raid everybody thanked God that it was.

Our congenial "Doc" Schmonsees and "Short-Circuit" Vaughn were the bosses down in that cellar which held the switchboard and the 508 radio. Yours truly was green at the switchboard but I soon learned the doggone thing and from then on wondered whether I was a telephone operator or a radio operator. This team spent hours down in that damp hole. Doc and Carle were usually working on the S.O.I. But living down there was somewhat of a treat, for we got to see just how fast the men could run down the stairway when "Bed Check Charlie" paid his nocturnal visits. First a lot of clattering footsteps and then Jim Devan would fire the .50 from his half-track. It sounded like all hell had broken loose in our alley.

Remember how the German people used to swarm the streets in the daytime? Some of those frauleins weren't half bad either. I know that one fraulein was a very frightened little girl one afternoon. She got caught in one of the raids and took shelter in our cellar. A room full of Tankers and one lonely fraulein. I don't know who was more scared — the guys or the girl, but everything turned out fine. I'm sure that the girl left with the highest esteem of the American soldier — that is, if she couldn't understand English.

OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE

With over a year of extensive training and undergoing numerous tests both in the field and in the classroom by various higher headquarters, the S-2 and S-3 sections departed from these shores ready to do their part in getting the S-2 and S-3 sections back to these shores as soon as possible.

However, due to the battalion being assigned to operate with the 99th Infantry instead of separately as a unit the two departments found that very little of their garrison training and tests were of actual use in combat. But don't get me wrong for plenty of extra-curricular activities were found to keep us very busy. A recommendation is being sent to the war department at this moment that in future S-2 and S-3 training be included extensive work in setting up and tearing down battalion CPs. Also, being worked on is a situation map (9 ft. x 9 ft.) that can be folded and carried in the S-2 or S-3 sergeants' pocket. All S-2 and S-3 sergeants are at present forming a union to prevent any information being placed on the situation maps except between the hours of 0800 and 1700. A particularly difficult problem is being worked on at present to enable the two sections to efficiently run the CP and at the same time be out in advance of the battalion headquarters picking out a site for the next CP. Such an operation is very confusing to the line companies for under these circumstances they have a hard time trying to figure out where to send their poop — to the old CP, to the new CP (if they only knew where that was) or try to catch them on the road.

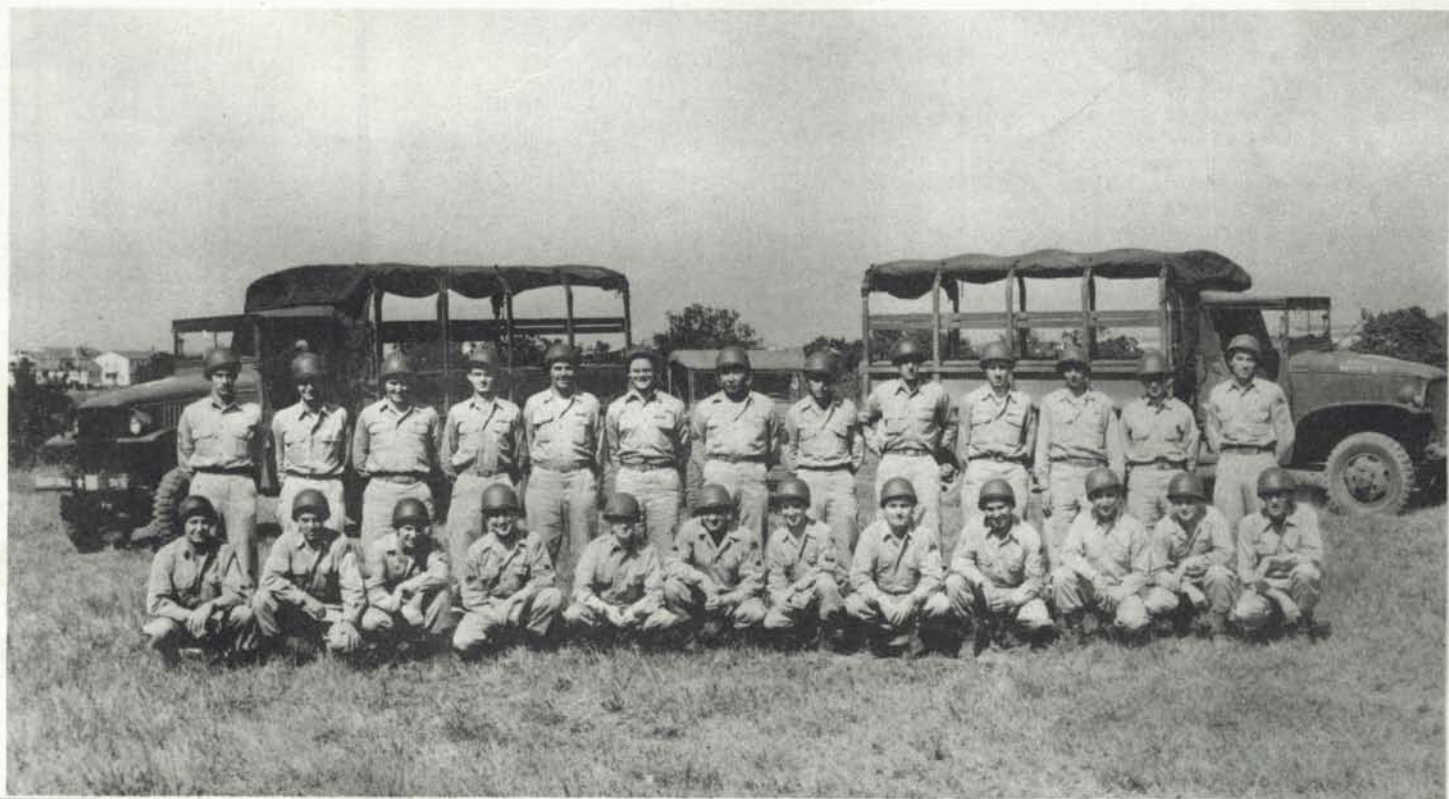
One thing the two sections learned was that all the propaganda that the "Paperhanger" put out on his people being a super-race was strictly that — propaganda. I don't think we chose one house in Germany for a CP that didn't have a sick or aged person in it who couldn't be moved. We usually managed to have the medics come to our rescue by providing the Boche with a stretcher to move the poor, wretched soul.

In closing, we have only one more suggestion to make. A law should be passed to make it illegal to have the sergeants and their draftsman stay up all night making copies of the fortifications of a certain city while the city was being taken by other units.



HEADQUARTERS TANK SECTION

Standing, left to right: Tec. 4 Earl Rogers, Cpl. Louie Bardino, Jr., Cpl. Carl G. Johnson, Tec. 4 Elwood Moore, Pfc. George Hunt.
Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Frank Persavich, Pfc. Robert Olson, Cpl. Charles Kurtz, Pfc. Edwin Miller, Cpl. Aristide Polini.



ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

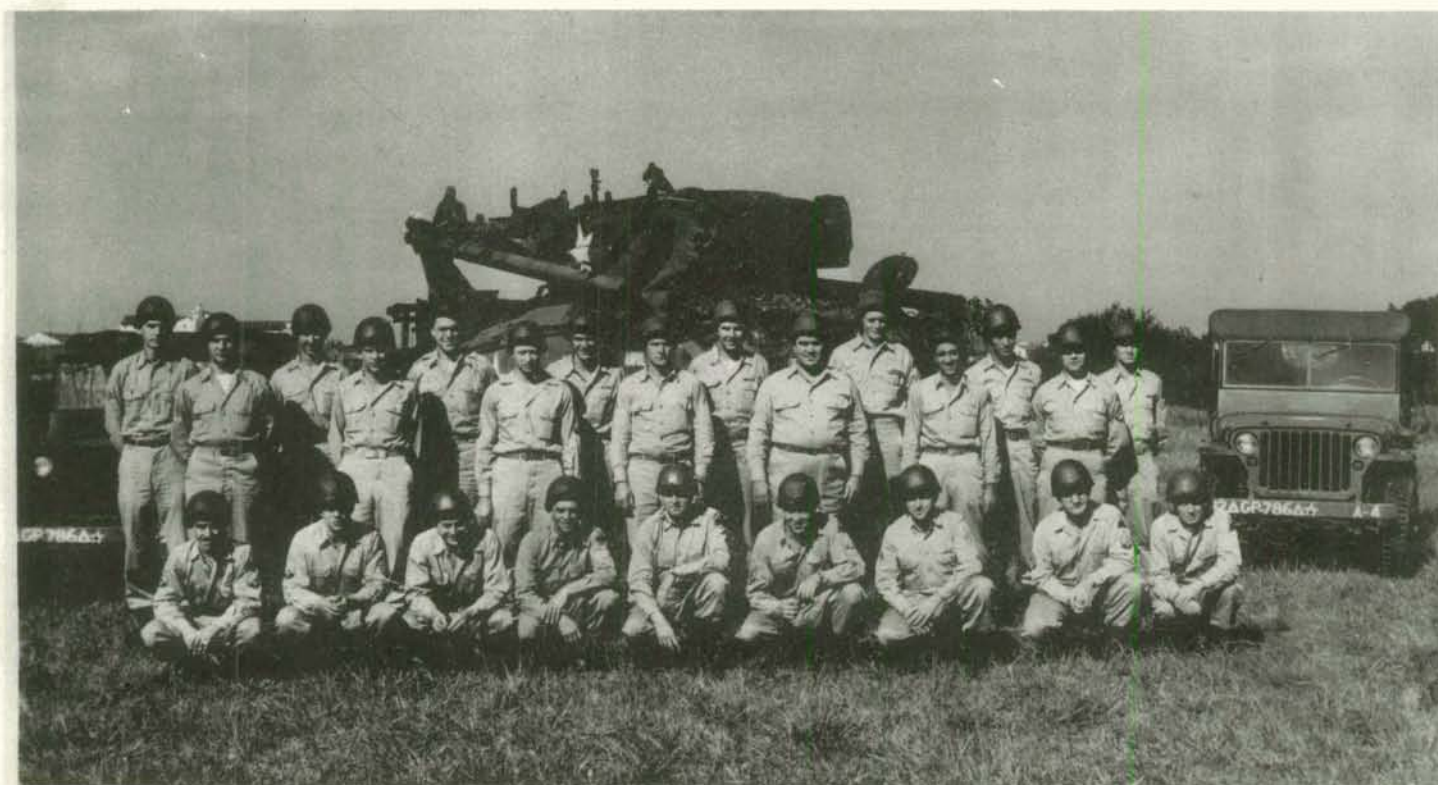
Kneeling, left to right: Nelson Wright, George Romero, Norman Franz, Vincent Cornell, WOJG Lally, Anton Wanek, Joseph Wright, Chester Lewinski, Richard Vaughn, Roy Hadden, Elmer Klosterman, Arthur Carle.
Standing, left to right: Ernest Littlejohn, Charles Steen, Hulen Hooten, Harry Neuhauser, William Lavin, Bernard Koenig, Noah Jumping Elk, Valmore Royer, Albert Bachleda, Lawrence Showalter, Robert Van Zante, Milton Yeager, Herb Goforth.



MORTAR PLATOON

Standing, left to right: Pfc. Edwin Stanton, Tec. 5 Samuel Stagnitto, Cpl. Walter Lejman, Pfc. Franklin Landis, Pfc. William Snodgrass, Cpl. Gail Gossett, Pfc. Ralph Smith, Jr., Cpl. Roman Pietrzyński, Pfc. Charles Dudzak, Cpl. Aubrey Faulconer, Tec. 5 Michael Budnick.

Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Frank Ross, Tec. 5 William Vidas, Pfc. Charles Foley, Sgt. Frank Keisch, S/Sgt. Ray Trachsel, 1st Lt. Titus Westbrook, Sgt. Charles Miller, Pfc. Miguel Gonzales, Pfc. Jeff Forrest.



HEADQUARTERS COMPANY HEADQUARTERS SECTION

Standing, left to right: Tec. 4 Wibur Syx, Tec. 4 Israel Kaplin, S/Sgt. Matthew Narkiewicz, Tec. 5 Don Reese, Sgt. Eugene Miller, S/Sgt. John Easley, Tec. 5 William Branham, Pvt. Robert Coker, Cpl. William Lavin, Tec. 4 Joseph Trutwin, Tec. 5 Franklin Swan, Tec. 5 Joseph Piedmonte, Tec. 4 George Duncan, Tec. 5 Virgillio Botta, Pfc. William Watkins.

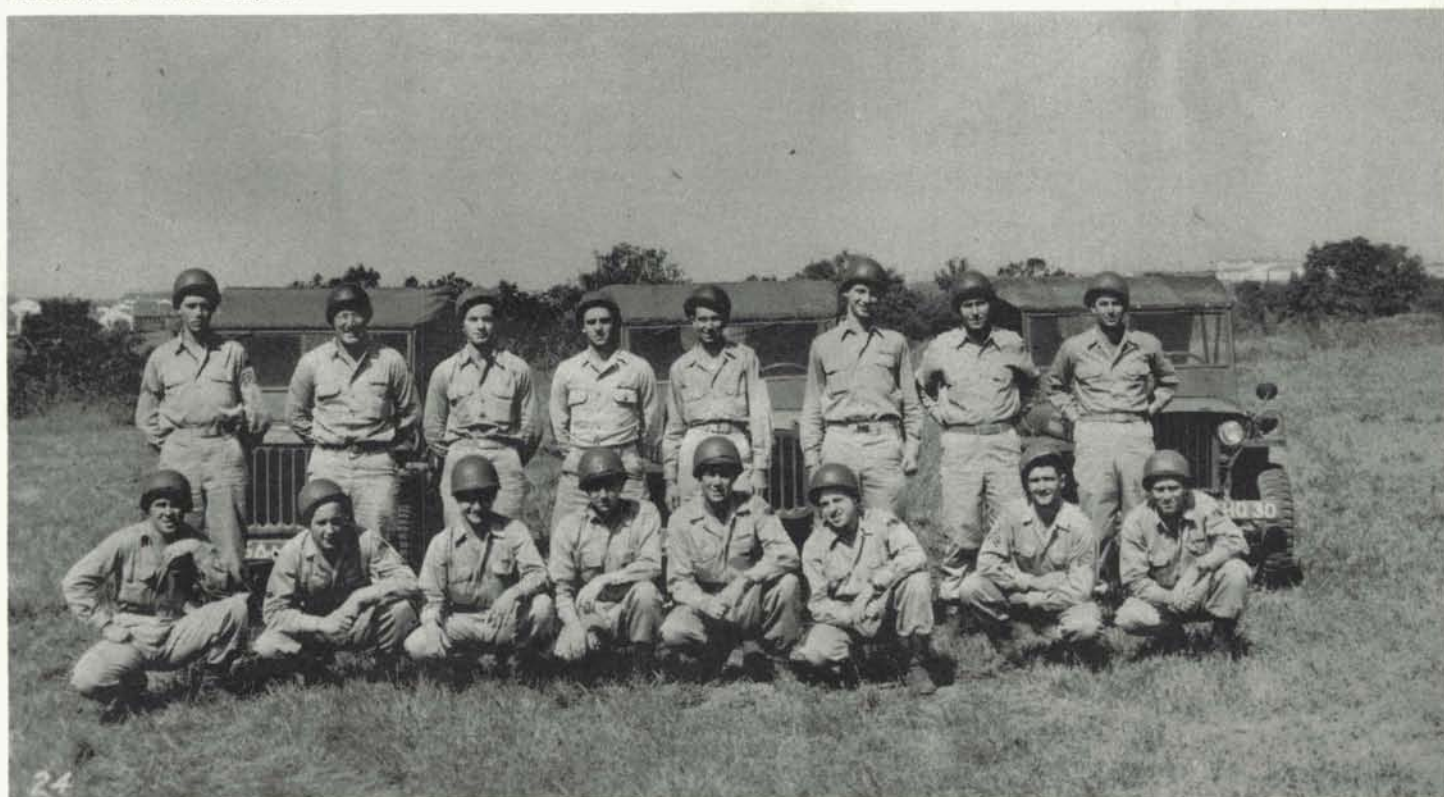
Kneeling, left to right: Tec. 5 George Kontos, Tec. 4 Elmer Alt, Pfc. Ezra Levine, 2nd. Lt. John McHugh, Captain Raymond Miller, 1st Sgt. Charles Brady, Tec. 5 Albert Dugas, Tec. 4 Roland Lepire, Pvt. Valentine Merchant.



ASSAULT GUN PLATOON

Standing, left to right: Pfc. Lawrence Clark, Pfc. Richard Holas, Pfc. Lonnie Griffen, Pvt. Chester Harej, Tec. 5 Doyle Young, Pfc. Truman Humphrey, Cpl. Milton Denninger, Sgt. John Sevinsky, Pfc. Vito Mikalauski, Tec. 4 Charles Wilcox, Pfc. Thomas Colwell, Pfc. James Powell, Tec. 5 Troy Trull, Pfc. John Sieracki, Pfc. Raymond Miller.

Kneeling, left to right: Sgt. Roman Donofrio, Sgt. Harold Landoll, Sgt. Robert Peoples, S/Sgt. Ralph Witschy, Tec. 5 Paul Ennis, Pfc. Glenn Trimble, Pfc. Willie Clayton.



RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON

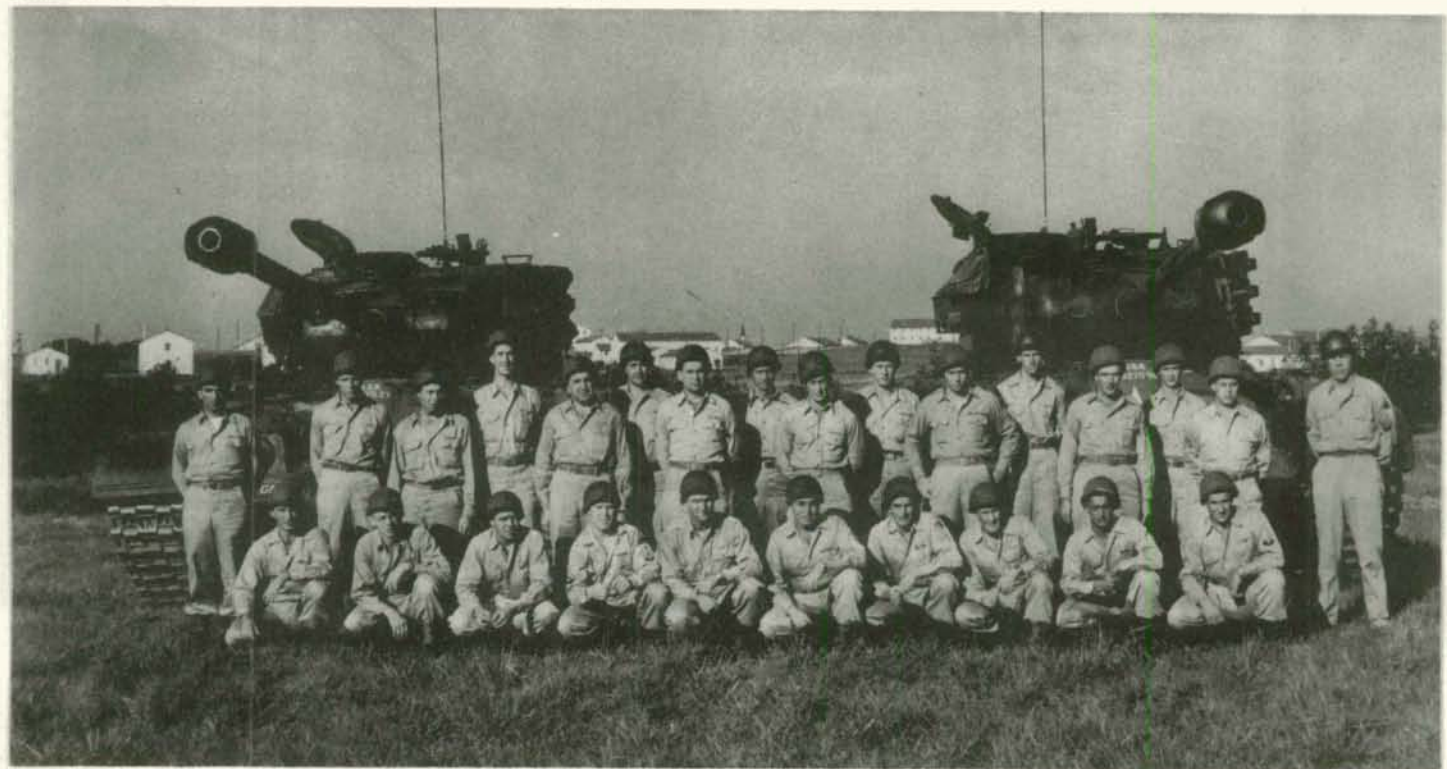
Standing, left to right: Cpl. Harvey Keller, Pfc. Roger Buhr, Pvt. Jessie Staggs, Pfc. Dennis Lightner, Pvt. George Perry, Jr., Pfc. David Skindlov, Pfc. Marion Snyder, Pvt. Lewis Fanning.

Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Claude Harris, Tec. 5 James Devan, Pfc. George Kersey, 1st Lt. Francis O'Brien, Sgt. Alton Robinson, Pvt. Patrick Pellegrino, Cpl. John Ellsworth, Pfc. Charles Thomas.



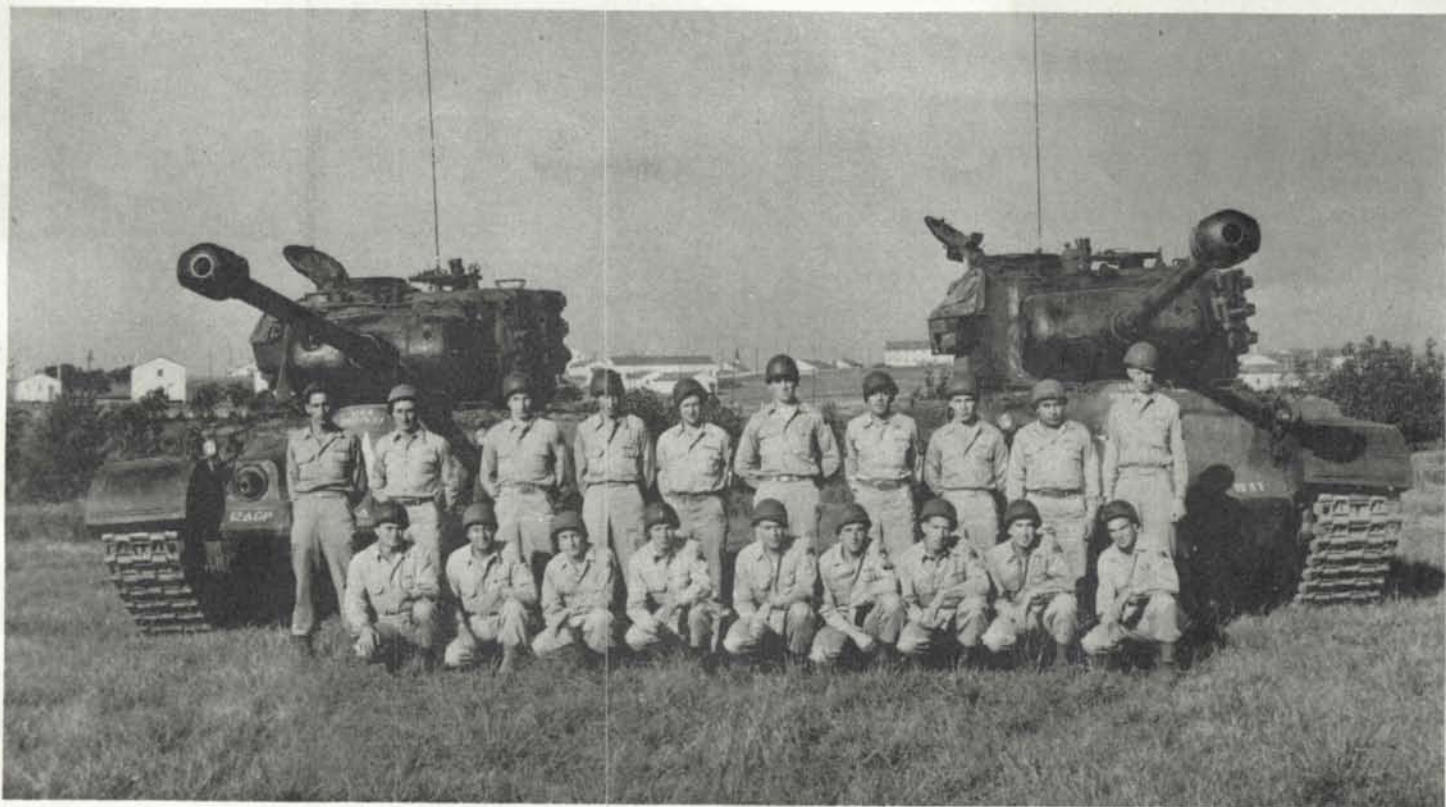
HQ. PLATOON, COMPANY A

Front row: left to right: Cpl. Roy B. Holsclaw, Tec. 4 Owen R. Smith, Cpl. Stanley Goldberg, Cpl. George G. Romero, Capt. Frank B. Harrington, 2nd Lt Roy D. Kerzman, 1st Sgt. Cloy C. Commons, Tec./Sgt. Jack C. Toms, Pfc. George E. Humphrey, Tec. 4 Thomas H. Fahrenholz. Standing, left to right: Pfc. Andrew J. Dispenza, Pfc. Roland A. Lemay, Sgt. Kermit E. Felzein, Tec. 4 Dulan E. Foster, Tec. 4 Harlan G. Hudson, Pfc. Lewis Gerber, S/Sgt. Patrick J. McNamara, Tec. 4 Charles E. Ford, Cpl. Louis J. Amistadi, Tec. 5 Roland J. Girouard, Tec. 4 Jack G. Frost, Sgt. Edmund P. Repski, S/Sgt. Michael Demshak, Jr., Pfc. Raymond E. Boltin, Tec. 5 Donald J. Cleary, Pfc. Clair J. Penner, Tec. 4 Willard P. Smith, Pfc. Allen J. Egger, Pfc. Alan N. Newman, Pfc. Ivan P. Duprey.



1st PLATOON, COMPANY A

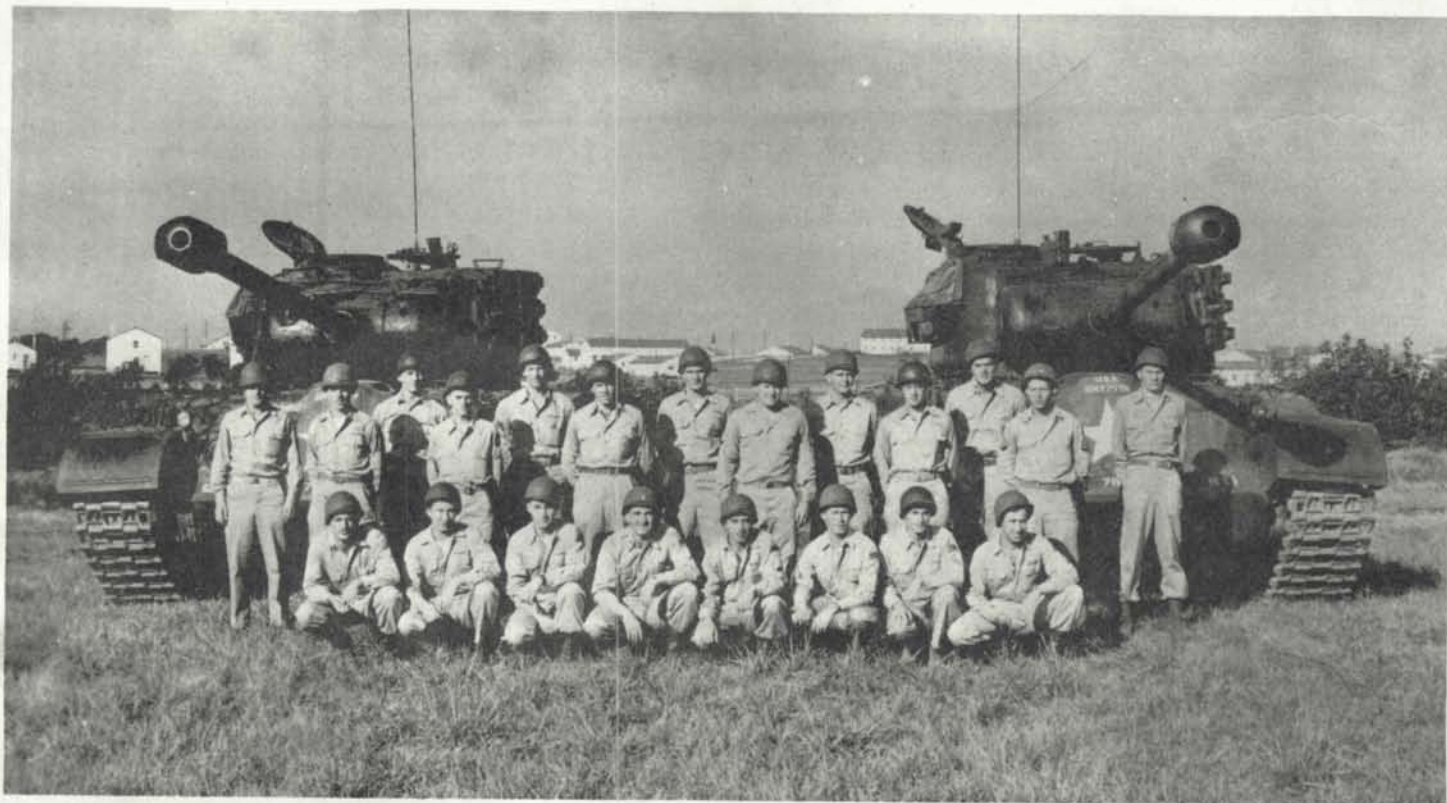
Front row, left to right: Tec. 5 John A. Ferrell, Jr., Pfc. Vernon E. Stolt, Cpl. James E. Fairchild, Tec. 5 Earl R. Hagan, 1st Lt. Henry F. Rauch, S/Sgt. William J. Begley, Sgt. Knute A. Brumberg, Pfc. Leonard J. Berry, Tec. 5 Joseph Giglia, Tec. 4 Sebastian S. Bevacqua. Standing, left to right: Pfc. Sam Trippe, Pfc. Arthur J. Collins, Pfc. Henry W. Switzer, Cpl. George E. L. Pleines, Pfc. Joseph Lapinski, Pfc. Harry A. Haley, Cpl. Raymond E. Dinges, Cpl. Ray A. Fleenor, Tec. 4 Leonard E. Hurst, Pfc. Charles J. Jefferies, Sgt. Loonie Sprayberry, Cpl. William D. Topping, Cpl. Fred D. Porter, Pfc. William W. White, Sgt. Patsy Fiorica, Tec. 4 Oscar Anderson.



2nd PLATOON, COMPANY A

Front row, left to right: Pfc. Leonard O. Elliott, Cpl. Daniel J. Natale, Cpl. Harold E. Herring, 1st Lt. Robert R. Heckman, S/Sgt. Joseph D. Carbine, Tec. 5 John Soares, Jr., Cpl. Charles H. Dowd, Sgt. Robert V. Bloomner, Pfc. Burrell Phillips.

Standing, left to right: Sgt. Michael H. Annunziato, Sgt. Wilkerson J. Guillot, Pfc. Harold M. Nighthart, Cpl. Harold A. Kloth, Tec. 4 Frank H. Schmitz, Pfc. Douglas L. Miller, Tec. 4 John J. Perry, Cpl. Robert L. Bailey, Cpl. Joe B. Valdez, Tec. 5 Thomas B. Butler.



3rd PLATOON, COMPANY A

Front row, left to right: Pfc. Daniel M. Christolos, Tec. 4 Joseph P. Buchnat, Pfc. Napoleon T. Beauvais, 1st Lt. Walter P. Zolnierczykiewicz, S/Sgt. James Tornatore, Cpl. Thaddeus L. Halski, Cpl. Paul V. Rogers, Tec. 5 Cletus A. Marsh.

Standing, left to right: Pfc. Edward Ratajczak, Sgt. Charles W. Finrock, Cpl. Ben R. Eldredge, Cpl. Merrald Hansen, Sgt. Carl G. Yost, Pfc. Daniel A. Foley, Pfc. Thomas F. Lee, Tec. 4 Harry L. Sheets, Sgt. James A. Hamilton, Pfc. Robert J. Campbell, Pfc. Dominick J. Lasseth, Tec. 5 Charles T. Faber, Pfc. George S. Sheroskey.

Company "A"

One dark night we were all bedded down as snug and cozy(?) as possible. We always kept one man outside the tank for guard and this night we were especially on the alert for the enemy had just pulled away as we came over the hill and we were expecting a counter attack during the darkness hours. About 2230 a noise like a thundering herd of buffalo approached our tank. Newman was on guard and raced behind the tank for protection. About that time all hell broke loose and shots rang out all over the place. About twenty Jerries ran behind the tank thinking it was one of their own. Our hero wanted to know if he would get a medal for capturing those Jerries single-handed.

Now for a little sad news that came to us around 15 March when we heard that Sgt. Buehler had been killed in action. We had crossed the Rhine and had passed on through the town of Linz taking a position on a hill. All morning long our planes had been bombing and strafing the enemy positions. Our tanks had had their panels displayed but the planes mistook some of them for Jerry tanks, a few of which were in the area, and started dropping bombs around us. The last we saw of Sgt. Buehler was about 1500 and didn't hear anymore until two days later when a medic outfit found him in a barn. They rushed him to the hospital and did everything possible but he had been found too late. Thus we lost one of the best liked men in the platoon.

* * *

All spearheading is not necessarily accomplished by the line platoons in a tank company. "Curly" Krisher, our able mess sergeant was often mistaken for a member of the recon platoon. One particular incident, well remembered by the company was the time, that after "Curly" received the location of the various platoons, he started out with a peep and chow. After feeding the second and third platoons he started for a Jerry town and the first platoon. He continued through the outskirts and on into the central sector. Finding the place completely void of GI's he turned around and started back on another road. About 400 yards out of town he found a 99th doughboy crouched on the side of the road. Krisher stopped and inquired of him, if he had seen any tanks in the town.

"Have they tanks in the town, too?" inquired the dough.

"Sure, and I was supposed to feed them," was the reply.

"Oh, you mean our tanks. Hell, they are half a mile back down the road."

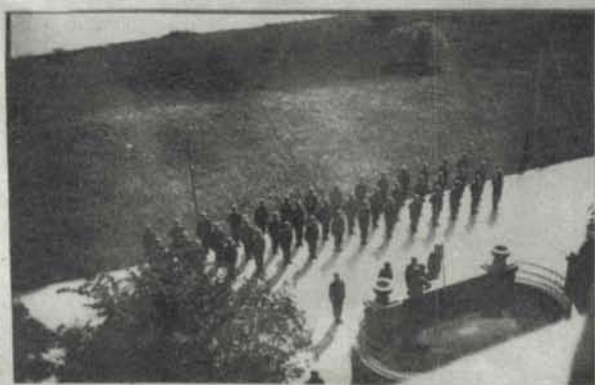
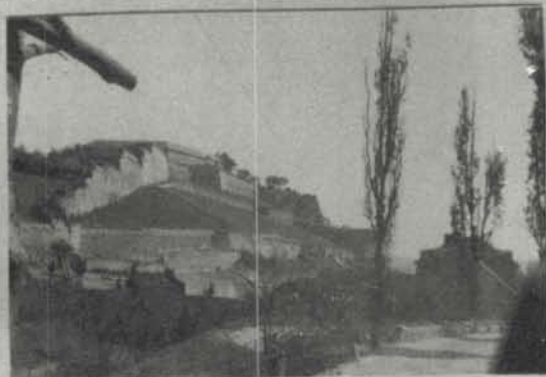
When the platoon had been fed, Krisher stuck around to watch the fun. After rather stiff opposition, the town was taken four hours later.

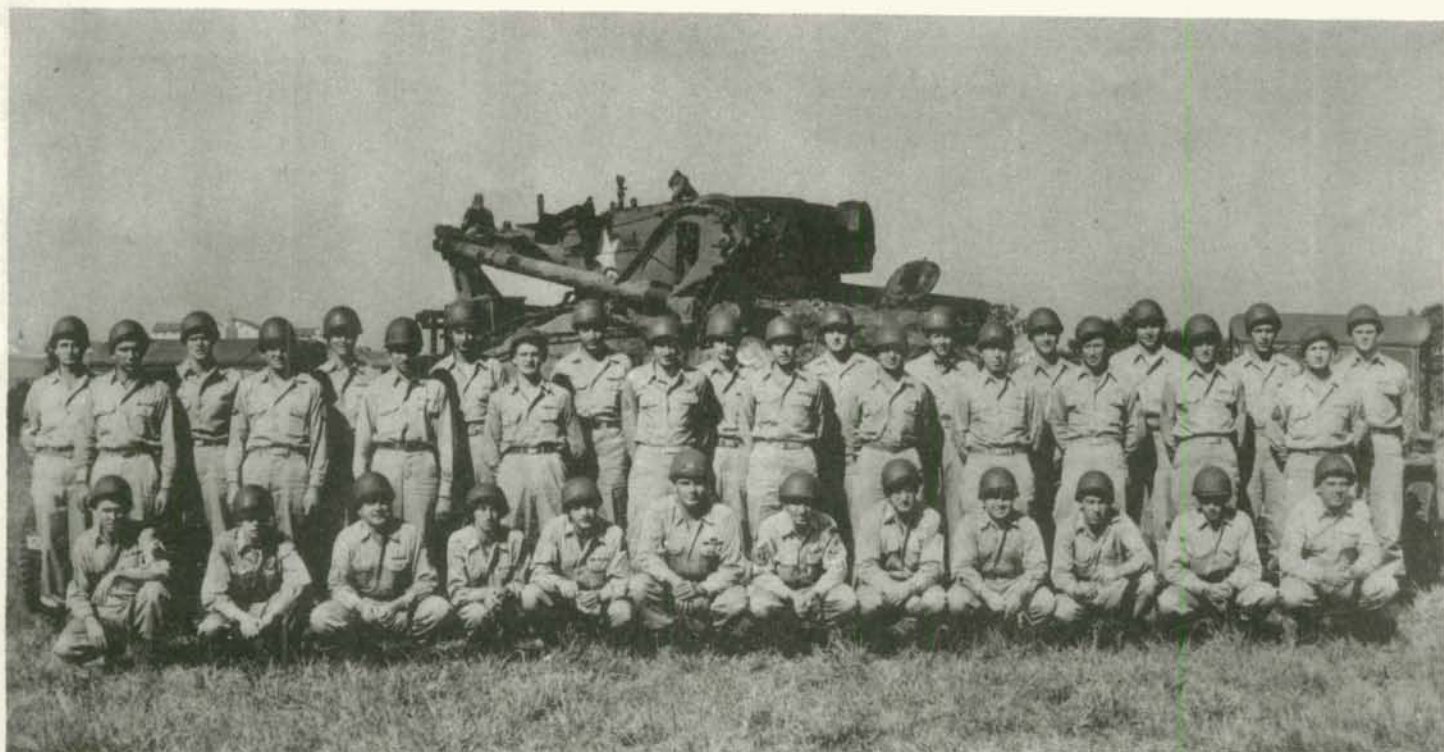
On another occasion the mess section, and particularly, Tec. 4 Mike Demshak were in action. Just after crossing the Danube with the mess truck, they came up to the second platoon. After being fed, and at just about dusk, Lt. Heckman received orders to move out. The outfit had set up headquarters in a hotel at the crossroads of a little village. The CO decided that he would set up a company CP with his peep and the mess section and call the rest of the company up the following day. About midnight that night, the CO heard what sounded like a lone TD roll thru the village. Pretty soon the vehicle returned and kept going to the other outskirts of the village. When it started back for the third time, the CO went out to help out a lost friend — only to be confronted by a lone Mark IV not 100 yards away. Immediately a hurry call was sent out for Mike and his bazooka. Actually, Mike could have done better with a frying pan. The lone Mark IV is probably still lost south of the Danube and Mike is still looking for the other half of his bazooka.

At this time we would like to salute Sgt. Berg and Tec. 4 Repski for a swell job done. Communications were excellent.

* * *

One night as we were spearheading through the heavy woods of Germany all had gone smoothly until suddenly firing was coming from all directions. No one knew just where it was coming from. Our position was obscured from the Jerries by the dark shadows, but the tiniest flicker of light would have given our position away. One of the men, a new replacement, wanted to know, during all the excitement, if he could turn on the light to see how to load the gun. That is when he almost got out and started walking. Later on several large flashes appeared from the woods in front of the tanks. The two lead tanks shook and quivered and questions started to be asked such as "What's cookin', doc?" which brought the answer, "Just grenades". But we found out soon that they were "Panzerfaust" or "Jerry Bazookas". Were our faces red after that.



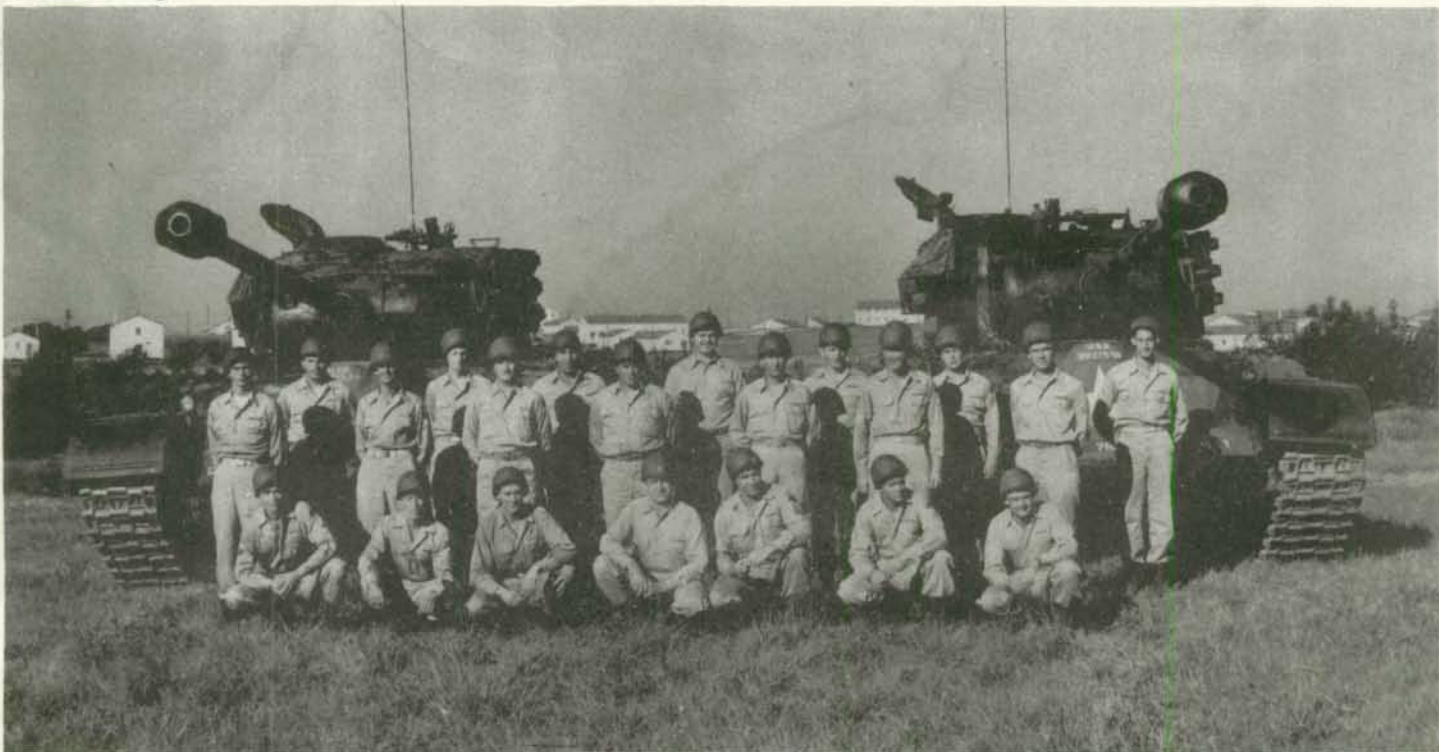


HEADQUARTERS PLATOON, COMPANY B, 786th TK. BN.

1st row, left to right: S/Sgt. Jerry J. O'Dell, Pfc. William R. Corbett, Tec. 5 Aubrey C. Wilson, Pfc. Raymond W. Budden, Tec. 4 Norman H. Volk, Capt. Bradlee F. Clarke, 1st Sgt. Dominick A. DiGioia, Pvt. James C. Verallas, Pvt. Armond R. Santone, Pvt. Jack C. Williams, Pfc. James R. Dix, Sgt. John M. Vowels.

2nd row, left to right: Tec. 4 LaVerne C. Liddick, Tec. 4 Wilbur F. Little, Pfc. Millard Little, Pfc. Raymond R. Hamilton, Tec. 4 Daniel Kapity, Pfc. Michael C. Schwartzbauer, Cpl. Samuel Vullo, Pvt. Robert G. Rowe, Cpl. Elden L. Edingfield, Tec. 4 Albert N. Dickson, Tec. 5 Sam Marinello.

3rd row, left to right: T/Sgt. John W. Freeman, Tec. 5 Spencer E. Blackburn, Sgt. Harold L. Canup, Pfc. Charles Z. Miller, Cpl. Isidro Rael, Cpl. William Breitenkam, Pvt. Witold J. Cap, S/Sgt. Jewell W. Duffey, Sgt. Edward J. Saad, Tec. 4 Carl H. Plotz, Tec. 4 Edward J. Andrews, Cpl. Bernard Koenig.

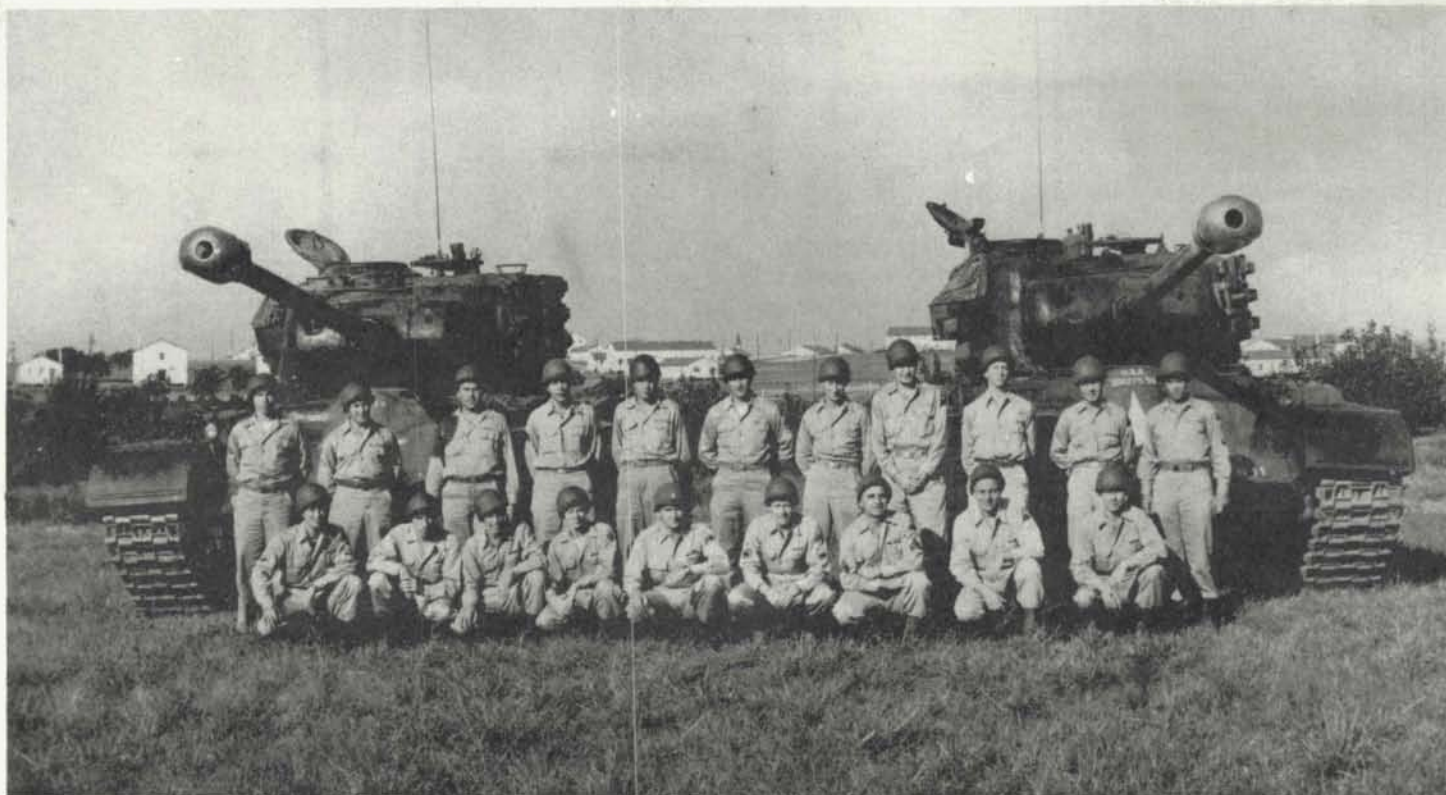


1st PLATOON, COMPANY B

1st row, left to right: Tec. 5 Morris E. Curren, Jr., Cpl. Robert Batchelor, Pfc. Elmer L. Farr, 1st Lt. Laurence O. O'Brien, S/Sgt. Jerry M. Cahill, Cpl. Eldon R. Braley, Cpl. Floyd H. Hamilton.

2nd row, left to right: Tec. 5 Wiley E. Williamson, Pfc. Patrick G. Schmidt, Pfc. John N. Richards, Cpl. George A. Gafsky, Pfc. John D. Nirk, Sgt. Joe S. Howard, Sgt. Edward L. Martin.

3rd row, left to right: Tec. 5 Joseph C. Cimera, Pfc. Bruce L. Castle, Tec. 4 Donald M. Abitz, Cpl. Otto R. Grunow, Tec. 5 John S. Vavrik, Tec. 4 Henry C. Arndt, Jr., Pfc. Kenneth H. Swoope.



2nd PLATOON, COMPANY B.

1st row, left to right: Tec. Salvatore Di Francesco, Cpl. Paul E. Lero, Pfc. Wayne I. Whiten, Pfc. Richard E. Dobbs, 1st Lt. Alfred F. Johnson, S/Sgt. William W. Simcox, Sgt. Alfred B. Cirilla, Sgt. Charles J. Barta, Pvt. Warren J. Nelson.

2nd row, left to right: Cpl. Irvin T. Yaeger, Pfc. Gaskell G. Davis, Tec. 5 Melvin W. Thompson, Sgt. Ernest C. McKenney, Pfc. Warren G. Taylor, Tec. 4 Kenneth D. Willey, Tec. 5 Clarence Gaskins, Pvt. James J. O'Connell, Pvt. James W. Henderson, Cpl. Harry B. Boyett, Tec. 4 Ralph J. Aofrate.



THIRD PLATOON, COMPANY B

Lt. Victor L. Palumbo, Tec. 4 Hurshel Howell, Cpl. Olan B. Jarrell, Pfc. Ralph Turverey, Pfc. Eldon Edingfield, Pfc. Joseph Krajacic, Sgt. Perry Ledford, Tec. 5 Johnnie Cordell, Cpl. Calvin Bingham, Pfc. Leonard Nephew, Pfc. Clyde Rugh, Sgt. Edward Saad, Sgt. Glennard Brown, Cpl. Kenneth Kappan, Cpl. William Breitenkamp, Pfc. Gustavo Garza, Pfc. Patsy Gentilcore, S Sgt. Jacob Fortman, Tec. 4 Earl Cramer, Cpl. James Brown, Pfc. Orlando Melio, Tec. 5 Everett Hill, Sgt. Charles Wood, Tec. 5 Jerry Shope, Cpl. Anthony Piccolo, Pfc. Marion Simpson, Pfc. Robert Zack.

Company "B"

Here it is September 20, 1960 and inasmuch as the commissioner is a very hardboiled character, who holds some very unorthodox and unfavorable views on gents who manage to pick up an honest dollar making books here and there, I am temporarily at loose ends. So I'm sitting in Terry's trying to enjoy a seidel of suds and wondering why those two meatballs at the end of the bar seem so familiar when one of them takes off his hat and I ain't wondering no more, I know. It's what used to be 'Vitalis' Hamilton and the gent with him with the loving cup ears could be none other than "Ears" Martin.

I haven't seen either of those boys since our last days at Dix so I hustle over and introduce myself. While one thing leads to another and it turns out they are out celebrating the old 786th's birthday and what with nobody to help them and a great deal of brew under their belts, they are melancholy and reminiscent indeed.

"Remember 'Coach' Braley," says Ears, after we loosened the elbows a bit. "And how he was always needling Joe Howard. I'll bet the 'Blue Bitch' never ran as fast as 'Fodge' did that night he was looking for a gun in Honnigen. The fire order 'Fodge' gave 'Crewchief' Canup that day was a classic."

"I understand you did a little running yourself that day. Lightning," chimes in "Vitalis". "I'll lay 8 to 5 that you are the first Cahill to even break into a trot."

Remember Honnigen? Lt. "Radio" Johnson thought it could be taken with one tank. It was finally taken with two of our tank platoons and a battalion of infantry. Lt. "Loot Chief" White-man was a hard man to keep up with. He often beat the tanks into town so that he could have first crack at lifting the wealth of the nation.

Do you remember "Can I Help It" Marinello on mail call? The boys either loved him to death or hated him to death. He used to cry when the boys told him that "Hose Nose" Fallon was the ideal mail man.

Macclesfield took the blue ribbon. Remember those night problems with "Skull" Williamson sneaking thru the back fences and "Bell Bottom" Graftsky wasting away to a mere 200 pounds climbing that hill from "Waters Green" every night. A good word for "A real jewel" Duffy; there is a boy that fed his men. He asked no questions (got no answers) and prepared meals out of nothing. He chiseled and stole so we wouldn't starve. The mess section was O.K.

If Lt. "Road March" O'Brien were here I'll bet he would be able to keep his end up as long as "Six Bits" Cimeria didn't try to load him up with some of that "Green Death" of his. They sure could handle that stuff.

Becco, Belgium was the deal. That was where we learned the true meaning of the word - hospitality. For a while it was almost a toss-up whether or not we would lose "Paw" McKinney and "Volunteer" Dedmon, fearing they were going to apply for Belgium citizenship.

Remember the ball team we had at Sill with "Seligmiller" Arndt starring at short? That's where "Sucker" Budden nearly lost his bachelorhood. "Ox" Grunow made a fortune on Saturday night. "Thoroughbred" Abitz activated "Troop B" 786th Cavalry and FEXT claimed more casualties every Saturday than the Remagen bridgehead.

In the Ruhr Pocket, the Jerries made it plenty tough. That was where "Swede" Vavrick counted six men in his crew one night and discovered a Jerry helping him gas up. And when "Stinky" Brietinger was eating in a kitchen farm house one night when handsome Taylor came in and found a Kraut sleeping in the next room.

"Old Man" Freeman was sent on a mission to repair the

suspension on my tank. It seems that the "Jerries" decided to put a little fire on the road he was traveling. He called over the radio "I don't know where you are but I'm coming in on a prayer."

"Dirty Face" Good, our immaculate first cook and "Timid Soul" Schwartzbauer were the boys who did all the work over there. They were the interpreters for the company. Did they like their jobs? It must have been alright for Good is going back to Germany and organize another beer cellar putsch. Carl "Oshkosh" Plotz, the man who spoke the classical German (at least he thought so) was the boy who did little fussing around. When work had to be done, he could do it.

There was the time at Laimersstadt that the Red Cross Unit came up with donuts and coffee. "Zip" Robinson tried to strike up a conversation with one of our gals who was engrossed in a conversation with a Lt. Col. who's motto was "Everything for the enlisted men except the Red Cross gals." This sort of irked "Zip" who came out in his sonorous voice with "Hey, fraulein". If looks could kill. Even the CO was frozen after that and "Zip" walked away contented that his mission had been completed.

The boys liked to drink, too. At Kordorf we ran across a wine cellar. Some expert's advise led us to the cache of cognac. Every man in the company was issued one bottle of the precious fluid. That night, the Bn CO came in and found a crap game in the Co CP in full bloom. Somebody's face was red.

The next morning "The morale of troops is high" Di Gioia was corralled and told that someone had looted the CP. It seems that some of the aforementioned cognac was stolen. After an investigation and much breath smelling he achieved success.

Lt. "Radio" Johnson joined us at Gohr. He was fresh out of the Recon Plat but after a few hours with a field manual all his knowledge of tanks came back to him.

Remember when Personnel got close enough to hear the guns. They were going along the road when suddenly a Kraut or two were seen. Our fearless combat clerks dismounted and opened fire. They employed all the tactics so painstakingly taught them at Chaffee. Our beloved clerk "Rumor Monger" Koenig used the phase concealment so well that even "Woo Gee" Lally had to organize a patrol to find him.

"Hot Poop" Vullo only visited us when he wanted some of our fried chicken or to tell us we had to move again. One time we had a commotion in the hall of our billet. It was about 0300 and everyone grabbed his gun and hit for cover. It turned out to be our CO throwing our friend down the stairs. "Hot Poop" made it a habit to visit the CO every day and he picked the wee hours of the morning to do it. Even with "Mr." Brad Clarke's troubles he did alright for himself. He used to specialize in duck dinners, which our very versatile medic, "Berry" Burrington used to prepare. A little diversion is good, that is why we like to look back at such things. Brad was a man loved by his men and fun to work with.

Dinty "Boy, am I drunk" Moore was a well known fellow. He was the guy who used to sample all the liquor in Germany. We will never forget how he used to crawl thru the corridors of the castle in Trifenstein, assuring the fellows he could walk if it was humanly possible. Some people say he pitches so well because he sees three batters instead of one and tries three times as hard to get him out.

To the men who couldn't come back with us because of wounds, PFC. GEORGE DAVIS and SGT. ALEX TOMACHEVSKY we send our best wishes and hope to see you soon.

To the men who will never come back, TEC. 4 EARL HERRING, SGT. JOE SAHM and CPL. HARRY NUGEN, we miss you. We are proud to say that we served our country alongside you.





HEADQUARTERS PLATOON, COMPANY C

Standing, left to right: Tec. 4 Harlon Rotnour, Tec. 4 Robert Boone, S/Sgt. Chester Mollon, Tec. 4 Glen Looney, Tec. 4 Coleman Lee, Sgt. Fred Moore, Pfc. Paul Kurtz, Cpl. Leopold Abreau, Pfc. Norman Shear, Cpl. Arthur Sizemore, Pfc. George Rosengrant, Sgt. Angelo Argenti, Pfc. Gerald O'Connell, Cpl. Harry Neuhauser, Pfc. Robert Oster, S/Sgt. Herman Hackl, Tec. 4 Flois Harrison, Pvt. Irvin Stafford. Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Robert Wix, Cpl. Frank Solomon, Pfc. Carl Quist, Sgt. Herbert Kersten, Capt. Albert Waldrop, Lt. David Russell, Tec. 5 George Mertz, Pfc. Angelo Mongelluzzo, Tec. 5 Joseph Kosey, Pfc. Aldo Poli.



FIRST PLATOON, COMPANY C

Standing, left to right: Tec. 4 Harold Reusch, Sgt. Roger Arnold, Pfc. Allen Simmons, Pfc. Reeves Walker, Sgt. Elzie Brown, Pfc. Thomas Murphy, Tec. 5 Donald Smith, Cpl. Eugene Pickard, Pfc. William Hagenbach, Sgt. Fred Murphree, Pfc. Walfred Ohman, Sgt. John Kosty, Tec. 4 Helmer Dahl, Pfc. Jones Lewis, Cpl. Charles Lucas, Tec. 5 Ralph Means. Kneeling, left to right: Cpl. Kenneth Watkins, Pfc. Harold Lee, Pfc. Lloyd Howard, Lt. Robert Hunter, S/Sgt. Virgil Enloe, Cpl. Maurice Davis, Tec. 5 Norman Winkler, Pfc. Ernie Wallace.



SECOND PLATOON, COMPANY C

Standing, left to right: S/Sgt. Dolan Moore, Cpl. Martin Pepe, Pfc. Emanuel Evans, Tec. 4 Clyde Rowlee, Pfc. Refugio Garcia, Sgt. James Jarosch, Pvt. Wayne Chaudoin, Tec. 5 Robert Searles, Pfc. Robert Mason, Pfc. Howard Kibler, Pfc. Oscar Wells, Pfc. Miller Wright, Sgt. Arthur Lindenmayer, Pfc. William Dundon, Pvt. Elgie Rhea.
Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Paul Culbertson, Sgt. Peter Rogowski, Lt. Francis Gray, S/Sgt. Benedict Brendal, Tec. 5 William Johnston, Cpl. Sydney Beckett, Cpl. Thomas Lennox.



THIRD PLATOON, COMPANY C

Standing, left to right: Cpl. Cecil King, Pfc. Floyd Ritter, Tec. 5 Henry Fish, Sgt. Fred Sonick, Cpl. Richard Henneman, Cpl. Kenneth Brooks, Cpl. Millard Smith, Cpl. Stanley Franckowiak, Tec. 4 Jimmie Jones, Pfc. Ralph Policarpio, Tec. 4 Henry Gerlach, Tec. 4 Donald Reeves, Pfc. Howard Kibler, Tec. 5 Nicholas Policarpio.
Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Charles Woodin, Pfc. James Rister, Pfc. Laverne Behrens, Lt. William Beggs, S/Sgt. Harold Jones, Pfc. Robert Zieger, Tec. 4 Harold Briggs, Pfc. Michael Olenhaus.

Company "C"

Remember the gyro tests back at Chaffee in '44. We had come in to garrison on the week end to take showers and rest up a bit. All the boys, having a great thirst for beer spent the entire day at the PX. Expecting to be without beer for the rest of the week, Shaffer, Stafford and Jarosch, the then champion beer drinkers and PX home-steaders, stocked up with five or six cases. What a sight they were carrying all this golden liquid to the motor park. It was rolled in bed rolls, stuffed in musette bags, tucked in pockets, and packed in barracks bags. Stafford, the strongest of the three was volunteered to carry the bulky bundle, the barracks bag with two cases of beer. He could hardly walk as it was and the added load really made him stagger. It was one of these staggers that threw him off balance and the beer hit the concrete with a bang, crash and a tinkle. Not wanting to break ranks he grabbed up the bag and kept on going with Shaffer and Jarosch close behind, catching the leaking beer in their helmets.

Dolan Moore, Syd Beckett and Albert Krause will long remember Palm Sunday morning of '45 when upon wakening found that their bedroom was also shared by a Jerry corpse.

Evans was assured of an egg supply due to a friendly hen with whom he shared his bog seat. Chi Chi and Emanuel went steady for at least two weeks.

When replacements were easy to ask for but hard to get, Culbertson withdrew from the sanctity of the kitchen and became a canoneer. His first job was to clean the spare 76mm barrel, which after a while he confessed he couldn't find.

There was the time Johnston in his ardent search for loot at Bergheim had strayed a bit too far from his platoon which moved out in the meantime leaving him stranded. He was last seen dashing madly down the road in front of a cloud of dust leaving his souvenirs behind him.

Wells got to be quite a driver over in Germany. He even learned to drive a tank with a Panzerfaust in the final drive.

Dundon had to keep his bog hatch closed all the time. It seems the snipers always picked on him.

Miller Wright was overlooked by G-2 as a secret weapon. Our belief is that his ceaseless chatter could have forced the Germans to quit months before V-E day. "Hut-two, San Antonio— draw two beers, over, roger, out".

One of Pepe's troubles seemed to be in shaving. One morning some mortar concentration blew down the door of the milkhouse in which he was shaving forcing him back into the tank to finish the operation.

Rowlee, the mayor's son, made a specialty of boiling eggs in beer. Needless to say, henfruit cooked in this way has a distinctive flavor.

Of all the combinations to have in one "Iron Coffin," Lt. Gray, the Virginian had one of the screwiest. There was a Dane, Pete (Yah, yah, put it in the bog seat) Christofferson; a Texas border jumper, Refugio (Send me back to Texas) Garcia; a Wisconsin lumberjack, Irvin (let's bowl 'em over) Stafford; and a Missouri mule, Elgie (go away and let me sleep) Rhea.

You could always find Jarosch, Pelland, Kibbler in some Jerry bedroom after dark holding a private jam session. Jim played the harmonica, Howie, his Dutch guitar and Cliff gave out with the spoons.

"Cherry Dip" Helton and "Teddy Bear" Zieger and Behrens earned the honorable title as "Tulsa Kids"

"Rebel Rouser" Rister reported to Captain Waldron in full dress German uniform, informing him of V-E day at Landshut. "Size 12" King re-enlisted in the Regular Army to get a furlough.

Ralph "La" and Vince "V" Policarpio got into an argument with the umpire when that fellow declared "La" had batted twice in a row and then Vince came out to prove that "La" hadn't batted before but rather that he, Vince, had batted and at the same time made the umpire swear off drinking.

Lt. "Bunny" Beggs radioed Sgt. Jones in the heat of battle, "There's a German woman having a baby up here. What shall I do?" "Over". Sgt. Jones replied, "Let her have it. Out".

"Glamour Boy" Fish hastily disposed of his hard earned souvenirs when he and his crew were about to be captured in a counter attack near Winkhausen.

The day after we crossed the Rhine we were under heavy air attack. Looney dove under the half track for cover. To his amazement he found himself lying in the open field as Price had driven the vehicle off to be used as an ambulance.

Mollon is still carrying that scar on his head from that baseball game with the colored boys.

Hopper was the chow liaison man. He would drive through enemy territory trying to get rid of that HASH.

Sizemore, the Indiana tire salesman, saw a great future in the tire business over there.

All this time Mess Sgt. Lee and his loyal cooks; Mertz, Arico, Culbertson and Mongeluzzo were chasing down chickens, cows, eggs, and Kraut food containers to feed the boys.

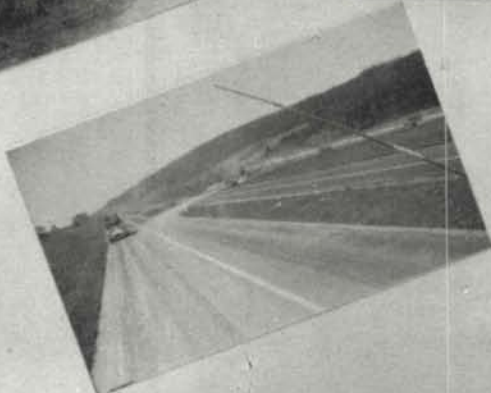
Algie Moore was the ideal supply sergeant who seemed to be able to get clothing and equipment anytime, anywhere and anyhow.

We also pay our compliments to that most sought after man in the company, dispenser of mail and sugar reports. "Aloysius-Lookout or I'll Drop You" Wright.

And remember how "Honest" Joe Kosey would dash through a hail of fire, checking the drivers for "Trip Tickets".

Then there was "Sheriff" Wesson doing his duty; collecting Kraut pistols to keep the Heinies out of trouble.

Then there was the time Lt. (theoretically speaking) Martin and Roger "Out" Arnold, heeding the call of nature, yet being very security conscious, armed themselves and each covered the other as they went about their business. Mission accomplished.





HEADQUARTERS PLATOON, COMPANY D

Back Row, left to right: Tec. 4 Kenneth Mitchell, Tec. 4 Stephen Hruska, Pfc. Authur Marky, Cpl. Mike Kozar, Jr., Pvt. Robert McGinness, Tec. 4 William Coombs, Pfc. Richard VanZante.

Center Row, left to right: Tec. 4 Morgan Moore, Tec. 5 Robert Comer, Pfc. Stanley Romaner, S/Sgt. Clyde Smith, Tec. 4 Edward Johnson, Tec. 5 Wilber Stephens, Tec. 5 Norman L'Esperance, Tec. 5 Verlin Osburn.

Front Row, left to right: Tec. 4 Robert Bowmaster, Sgt. Peter Cornejo, 1st Lt. Richard Dyball, Capt. Malcolm Webber, T/Sgt. Samuel Neill, Tec. 5 Michael Anzalone, Pfc. Michael Notarfrancesco, Pfc. Joseph Bartol.



FIRST PLATOON, COMPANY D

Standing, left to right: Pfc. John Campbell, Sgt. Anthony Giampa, Sgt. Stewart Schiffert, Pfc. Burton Sharp, Pfc. David Keller, Cpl. John Lorber, Tec. 5 William Dunn, Tec. 4 Lee Collins.

Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. David Christeson, Tec. 5 Angelo Callisto, Sgt. Edward O'Connell, 1st Lt. Raymond Ackerman, S/Sgt. Carl Gaiani, Cpl. William Hartman, Pfc. Lloyd Moore, Cpl. Alan Sandberg.



SECOND PLATOON, COMPANY D

Standing, left to right: Cpl. Archie Baker, Pfc. Harold Gibson, Sgt. Thomas Bivens, Tec. 5 Stanley Granica, Tec. 5 Cecil Erwin, Jr., Pfc. Duane Palmiter, Sgt. Maurice Weaver, Cpl. Robert May.

Kneeling, left to right: Cpl. Floyd Wright, Tec. 5 Louance Womble, Cpl. Charlie Miller, Cpl. John Kantor, S/Sgt. Vincent Zajkowski, Pfc. Kenneth Strait, Sgt. Marvin Nunes, Tec. 5 George Elston.



THIRD PLATOON, COMPANY D

Standing, left to right: Pfc. John Hammond, Cpl. Norman Funk, Pfc. Basil Woods, Cpl. William Fealy, Tec. 4 Kenneth Park, Sgt. Levi Guinup, Tec. 4 Eugene Held.

Kneeling, left to right: Sgt. Roman Dzieminski, Tec. 5 Dominic Paternostro, Pfc. Archie Swarm, 2nd Lt. Walter Wyant, S/Sgt. Martin Dunay, Cpl. Freddie Gold, Pfc. Stephen Triska, Jr., Pfc. James McGregor.

Company "D"

On the morning of November 28 we boarded the "Ile de France". This was to be our haven for the next two weeks. KP was the first thing that greeted us but it later proved to be a lucky break for only two meals were served daily. No sooner had we got settled on board when the gruff voice of Tony Giampa echoed from another compartment, "Whose got any dice?" "Got any money," responded Sam Neill. "Don't be smart," came the crack from Stew Schiffert.

"When do we eat?" asked Bob May. "Right now," answered 1st Sgt. Hanson as he went about picking out a detail of KP's. "Gee, it wasn't like this at Fort Sill," bellowed Mike Homa as he ambled along to "B" deck messhall. Off to the kitchen the detail went.

This was routine for two days. Finally on the morning of the 30th we sailed. After a few hours at sea, we all noticed a shift in our physical condition. There was a mad dash to the latrines; steel helmets never received such a reception as this. The poor Joe in the lower bunk couldn't abandon his place of comfort fast enough. Men, pallid and slightly greenish around the gills, sought corners or avenues of relief. Many presented appearances of human geysers. Our old fear of Mr. Seasickness had taken a temporary hold of the passengers. At the sound of a man in distress Pete Cornejo would suddenly, with hands over mouth, dart for the nearest latrine. He couldn't find his steel helmet.

As always, this state of affairs settled down to an enjoyable ride. In the evening the order over the loud speaker system, "Blackout is now in force", or "Clear the decks, please" received a loud chuckle as we enjoyed hearing the English officer speak. Despite the crowded conditions and various details we all had a lot of fun. Mike Anzalone was brutally awakened from a sound sleep one night as some wise guy stuck some frozen sausage on his back.

At last the boat ride ended, as we docked in Scotland. We sincerely hoped we'd live to make the ride back.

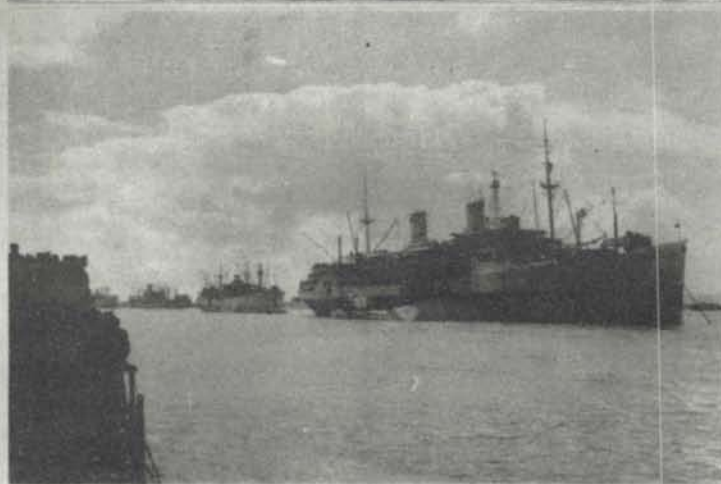
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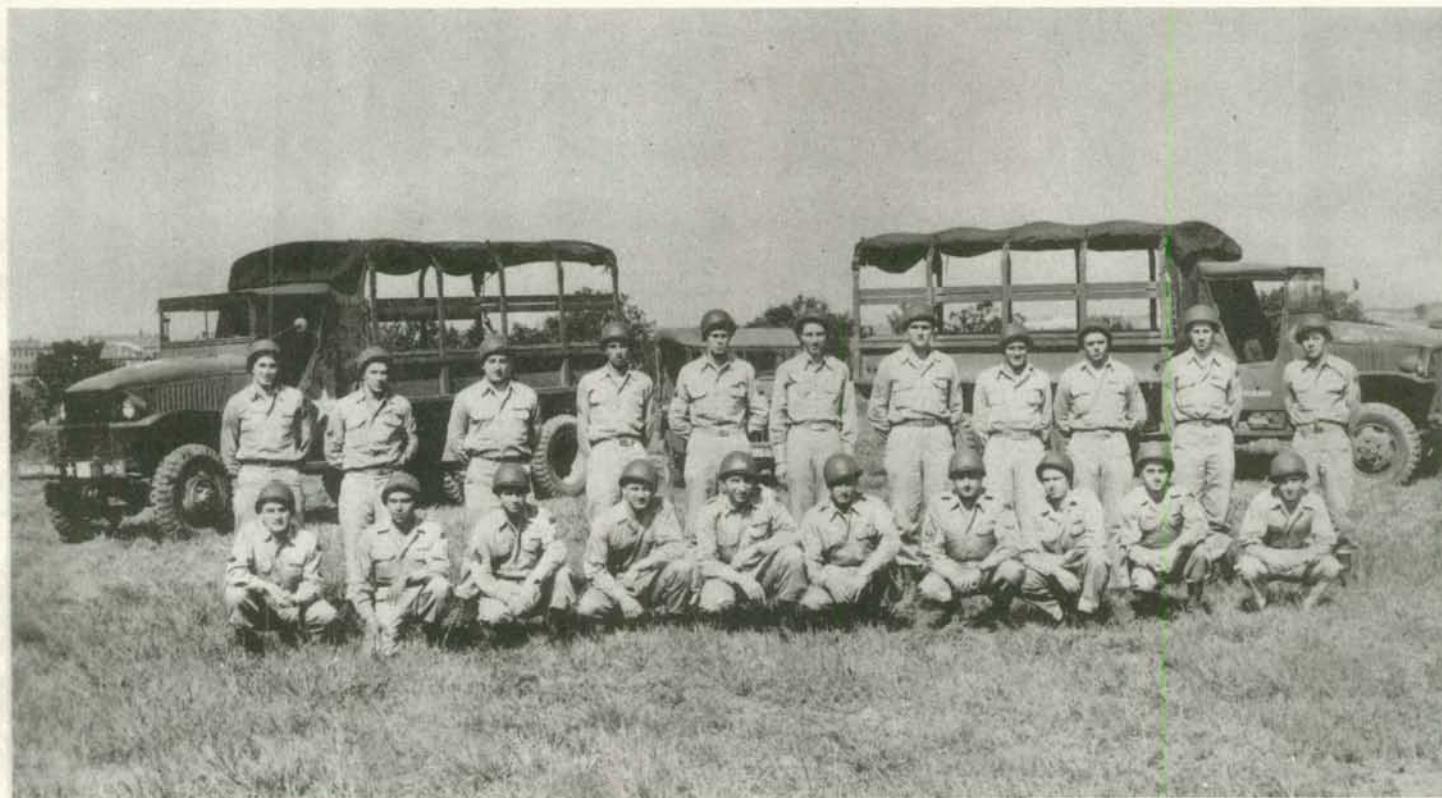
We all heard the clanging of shovels against rocks and saw the leaves on the trees shake from the impact of the dirt. Curiously we looked at each other and we decided to investigate. Reaching the scene of the excitement, we found Art Marky in operation on a 6 x 6 x 6. After firing questions at him he finally confessed that fraternizing doesn't pay.

John Hammond and Smiling Jack Stevens were more glad to see the end of the war and more specifically the blackout, than anyone. One very dark night while driving in blackout, John, who was the peep driver, got a little close to the shoulder of the road. Suddenly to his disgust, he found himself stuck. Following close behind him was a 32 ton Sherman tank. Before John could guide the tank to the left of his peep there was the smashing of metal and the tinkling of glass as the iron monster unknowingly continued on its way. John looked for his peep but was shocked at the sight of the mass of twisted fenders and broken glass. Our friend Smiling Jack, who was driving a truck in the same convoy, had the misfortune of barging into a large stump while making a turn. Thinking that he had only encountered a small obstacle, he started to take off full blast. Up through the floor of the truck popped the end of the stump. Jack knew now he had gone far enough. Field expedience would now take over.

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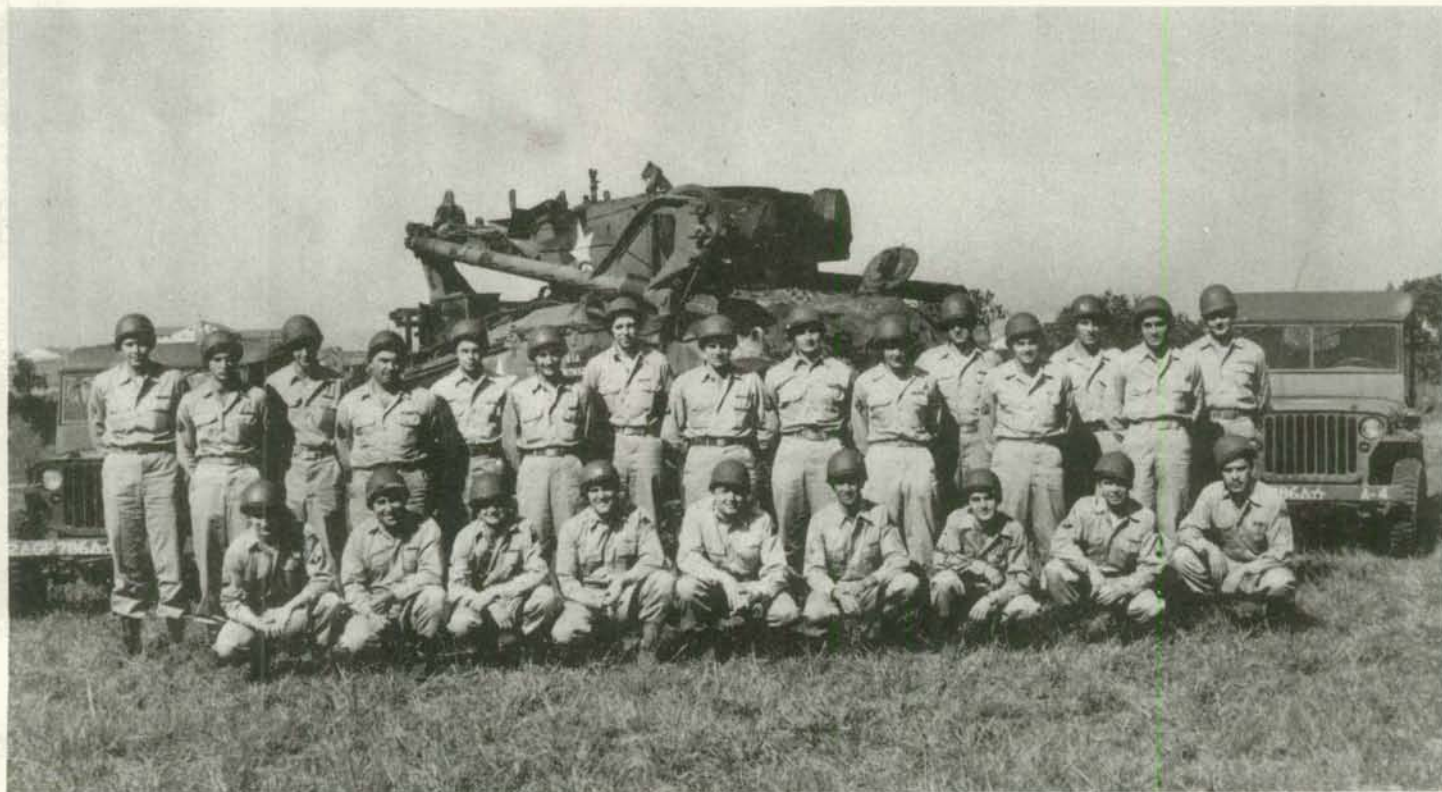
After looking high and low through Germany, Captain Weber finally bought for \$50 what he had long been looking for. That was a nice shiny Mauser pistol. He found a few rounds for the gun and then merrily sought a place to fire it. This he did with splendid results. Packing the gun around for a few days he got the urge to shoot it again, so he took Cornejo out to a secluded spot. Proudly he drew and took careful aim. There was a loud explosion, the Mauser had blown-up. With a look of astonishment he threw the stock of the pistol away and returned to the Company area.





HEADQUARTERS PLATOON, SERVICE COMPANY

Standing, left to right: Tec. 4 Warren Hall, S/Sgt. Barnabus Heldman, Pfc. John Butta, Sgt. Robert Limpf, Tec. 5 Evan Hough, Jr., Pfc. James Gann, S/Sgt. John Severn, Pfc. Thomas Carlisle, Pfc. Johnny Dolog, Tec. 4 Lawrence Showalter, Tec. 5 Roy Bourgeois.
Kneeling, left to right: Tec. 4 Joseph Mastriano, Tec. 4 Ralph Mendez, Sgt. Napoleon Sobolewski, Tec. 4 Edward Bakota, Capt. Francis Forrette, 1st Lt. Matthew Roberts, 1st Sgt. Frank Lovechio, Tec. 5 Calvin Conner, Pfc. Ralph Tanchedi, Pfc. Norman Kohlbrenner.



MAINTENANCE PLATOON, SERVICE COMPANY

Standing, left to right: Tec. 4 Clyde Pistole, Tec. 5 Joseph Iannotti, Tec. 4 Wilson Riggs, Tec. 4 George Baird, Tec. 4 Norval Merchant, Tec. 5 Isaac Hughes, Jr., Tec. 5 Rudolph Kolessar, Tec. 4 Alfred Mandile, Tec. 4 John Rhall, Jr., Tec. 4 Jay Gould, Jr., Tec. 4 Joseph Medeiros, Tec. 5 John Kesti, Jr., Pvt. Alvin Berens, Sgt. Alexander Piwowar.
Kneeling, left to right: Tec. 5 Laverne Pranke, Tec. 5 Joseph Kozlowski, Tec. 5 Anthony Mikula, Capt. Josiah Newcomb, Jr., WOJG John Bowen, M/Sgt. Charles Denny, Tec. 4 Willis Shaw, Tec. 4 James Collins, Tec. 4 Raphael Alvarez.



TRANSPORTATION PLATOON, SERVICE COMPANY

Standing, left to right: Tec. 5 Glenn Burt, Cpl. Robert Welch, Pvt. Joseph Shockley, Tec. 5 Pearl Heath, Tec. 5 Carl Dawson, Pfc. Jose Mendez, Jr., Pfc. Teddy Cass, Tec. 5 Carol Hebert, Pfc. Lesley Church, Pfc. Guido Zerbato, Tec. 5 Walter Bujalski, Tec. 5 Richard Gosney, Pfc. Wayne Frazier, Pfc. Sylvester Fisher, Tec. 5 Marvin Scott, Pfc. Solos Null, Pfc. Raymond Borth, Tec. 5 Orton Henning, Pfc. Burton Holloway, Tec. 5 Gerald Huffman, Pfc. Arthur Heitritter, Tec. 5 Arthur Miller, Pfc. Russell Green, Pfc. Walter Pysz.
 Kneeling, left to right: Pfc. Glenn Miller, Pfc. Lloyd Dillingham, Pfc. Earnest Cook, Tec. 5 Paul Grossman, S/Sgt. Russell Myers, 1st Lt. Russell Miller, T Sgt. William Gross, Pfc. Cloyce Davis, Pfc. Jean Catlin, Tec. 5 Stephen Yekich, Tec. 5 Archie Nelson.



MEDICAL DETACHMENT

Front row, left to right: Fred L. Barone, Bruce Brunk, John L. Sieverson, James G. Tynan, Gale M. Burrington, Joseph H. Otto, Anthony J. Vescio, Matthew Harris.
 Back row, left to right: Leo La Forge, Jay Marshall, James H. Miller, Hershel Brandon, Everett C. Stough, Don F. Heller, Owen Johnson, Carmelo La Falce.

Service Company

Three weary GI's were resting in an empty German home. Their rest was short-lived when one of them said, "Something's eating me up." By the dim candle light they watched whole armies of German bed-bugs and roaches pass by. Sgts. Lovecchio, Gross and Furlong will be allergic to bugs for some time to come.

Six by six by six: Mountainous pile of dirt and the clank of shovels hitting hard Oklahoma dirt. "Square Head" Null and "Chaw Tabacco" Buffington must have been looking for something they lost.

Seconds: "Don't you ever get enough to eat the first time?" asks Barney Heldman. "No," says Dolog, "Neither does Dawson."

Good-hearted: Supply sergeant John Severn would give you almost anything you need if you sign for it. But did you ever notice the "Statement of Charges" sign above your signature?

Hard Luck: Ask Russell Myers where did he spend his last three days of furlough.

Point Happy: Cpl. (pardon me!)-Sgt. Showalter has a lot of fun these days counting discharge points, besides sweating out his own.

Gun Happy: Remember Shockly, everytime I was sergeant of the guard you went around playing "Wild West" with guns blazing? There was a certain captain that ducked behind a log pile one night with the sergeant of the guard right alongside of him. It seems that Shockly was peeling the bark off the log with a TSMG.

Lost: There was a time that Catlin spent seven days of a furlough trying to get to New York via California.

First: Back home in Lackawanna, Yekich's name is first on a long list of names of men in the service. All the rest of the names are in alphabetical order. Must have a relative on the Executive Committee.

Walkie-Talkie: Edgar Franklin, they tell me, has the broken record beat.

Chow: Sobolewski is a good fellow, but when he sits down to eat all he can say is "Mighty good, mighty good!"

Gas Station: Lawrence says he used to work in a gas station. Is that the reason that he is now "Chief Gas Dispenser" for the battalion?

* * *

HE WAS A GOOD OLD SOUL

Brown was a good old soul, who seemed to know it all;
Famous for his gravel voice, each reveille he would scare the boys.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

Ol' Pistole was a good old soul, could bend iron, hot or cold;
Worked so hard it almost broke his neck, when every vehicle in the Bn needed a rack.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

J. Kesti was a good old soul who, for all his money couldn't find a hole;

Made watch bands by candlelight, and cut hair till he almost lost his sight.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

Kozlowski was a good old soul, with hair on his back like a mole;

Always seeing the "I. G.", after that for a while, quiet he'd be
Yes, he was a good old soul.

Rhall was a good old soul, while in Linz crawled into a hole;
Because what he drank was hotter than Irish stew

At a high ranking officer, a bottle he threw. Yes he was a good old soul.

Iannotti was a good old soul, picking up junk, new and old
Always stealing and frying chickens, which made the Krauts mad as the dickens.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

G. Baird was a good old soul, wouldn't worry — young or old,
That his joints would ever wear out, because of the grease he carried about.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

Mandile was a good old soul. Always peeping into a barrel hole;

A good gunsmith he was, very little he ever does.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

J. Collins was a good old soul, didn't think that he was old;
He hurried up and looked alive, when they discharged all over 35.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

R. Alvarez was a good old soul, drove all over Germany peeping thru a hole;

His riders he did scare a plenty, 'cause MPH he rode a hundred-twenty.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

E. Henry was a good old soul, for work he was too old;

We made him a rack, so he could lay on his back.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

R. Kolesar was a good old soul, watching spiders come out of a hole;

Bugs and spiders he did dread, which we always put in his bed.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

L. Cranston was a good old soul, nothing in his life he ever stole;

Honest, big and brawny, he always hated the army.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

I. Hughes was a good old soul, and much to his captain's woe;
Rode his peep all thru the ETO, and never missed a hole.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

Denny was a good old soul, always did as he was told;

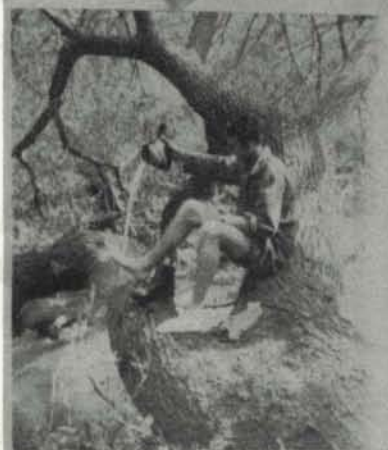
He knew someday he'd be elevated. So now, a M/Sgt., he is rated.

Yes, he was a good old soul.

Piowar was a good old soul, all these verses he composed and "tole".

Let's not be offended by these friendly ribs, 'cause the author himself told a bunch of fibs.

Yes, I am a good old soul.



History of Battalion Athletics

Activation of the 786th Tank Battalion saw a majority of the better athletes of the 47th and 48th Armored Regiments brought together under one command. Although military training was strenuous and the time allotted to sports was necessarily not excessive, the battalion was able to produce teams in basketball, softball and baseball, all of which made enviable records.

Under the guidance of Lt. "Arnie" Lurie, a basketball team was formed and entered in the Camp Chaffee league for the 43-44 season. The squad played a fine brand of ball, and completed the regular season with a record of sixteen games won and one lost. The only blemish on an otherwise perfect record occurred when the 717th Tank Battalion defeated the 786th in a hotly contested game for the post championship. Apparently our boys were overly anxious to win this game, the result being a rough and tumble affair that saw no less than four of our starting lineup benched due to personal fouls.

The squad was composed of such stellar courtmen as Hammond, Dzieminski, Moore, Abshire, Gross, Sheets, Hamilton, Bill, Willey and Hussey.

Softball was featured throughout the battalion during our training at Ft. Sill, as well as our "sweating out" period in January and finally extensive tournament competition at Camp Gruber. The results of the Gruber competition were not completed at the time of this writing. Baker Company behind the

fine pitching of Carl Plotz, dominated play in the softball department, winning two tournaments played between all the companies within the battalion. This company played in the Lawton, Oklahoma city league. Both Baker and Dog companies are strong contenders for the Gruber Post championship.

The baseball team, managed by Major Ryan, is probably the best known of all the unit athletic teams. Before leaving for overseas duty, the team played a full season in the Fort Sill league, known to be the strongest in the army. The Second Battalion colored Truck Regiment had the "Indian sign" on the "Tankers," and managed to edge out the latter team in three straight games by the scores of 1-0, 2-1, and 3-2, in a series long to be remembered at Sill. These were the only games lost by the 786th during the entire season, which gave the team a season of 22 wins and 3 losses, and a tie with the "Truckers" for the post championship.

Dinty Moore will long be remembered at Fort Sill for his pitching record. He averaged fourteen strikeouts per game.

With the cessation of hostilities in Germany, the team opened up a new campaign in Wurzburg playing three games without a loss before returning to Gruber.

At the present time the 786th is tied for the lead in a nine team race for the Gruber post championship.

Keep an eye on the major league lineups during the next few years. You may see some familiar names.

